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WOMEN AS WAGE-EARNERS
AND THE SIGNIFICANCE THEREOF IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC THEORY

C. R. Fay

IT would not be so very far from the truth to say that political economy was born in Charles II's London out of taxes, plagues and envy of the Dutch. Inside Sir William Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (1662) there is a core of economic theory—a preliminary statement of the law of rent, and that famous first effort after an immutable standard of value which runs: "all things ought to be valued by two natural denominations, which is land and labour . . . . so as we might express the value by either of them alone as well or better than by both, and reduce one into the other as easily as we reduce pence into pounds" (Petty's *Works*, ed. C. H. Hull, 44-45). In the same year, 1662, came John Graunt's *Observations on the Bills of Mortality*, an epoch-making pioneer work in vital statistics. The bills were for London, and the series began in 1603. They recorded christenings and burials, and the causes of death, as reported by the searchers, who "are ancient matrons sworn to their office"—a grim employment indeed. The reason for the compilation was the periodic ravage caused by the plague, and by studying aggregates over the long period from 1603 to 1664 (for the great plague of 1665 led to a second edition in that year), Graunt was able to observe their peculiar properties, to become in fact the first statistician. He found that there were more males than females in the tables, and "that the one exceed the other by a thirteenth part." Nevertheless, "the said thirteenth part difference

bringeth the business but to such a pass that every woman may have an husband without the allowance of polygamy"—and for these reasons:—"More men die violent deaths than women, that is, more are slain in wars, die by mischance, drowned at sea, and die by the Hand of Justice; moreover, more men go to Colonies, and travel into Foreign parts, than women; and lastly, more remain unmarried than of women, as Fellows of Colleges, and apprentices above eighteen." (*op. cit.*, ed. Hull, II, 375: this edition of Petty includes Graunt.)

To the statistician, as contrasted with the lawyer or economist, there is no question of bias for or against women. To him males and females are like black and white, odd and even, which in sufficiently large number exhibit laws.

But the political economists of the Restoration, though they might discourse on taxation and vital statistics, were interested in the main in the characteristics of nations, in the differences between the wealth and policy of England, Holland, France and Spain. Holland was the envy and the pattern of seventeenth-century England. Of set purpose England followed her in the pursuit of commerce and manufactures; and out of this pursuit a century later emerged the industrial revolution, with its profound reactions upon the economic status of the family and in particular of the women and children in it.

When Adam Smith was lecturing in Glasgow, and even when he published the *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, the industrial revolution was in its very early stage. In the *Lectures*, as we have them, probably for the session of 1762-3 or 1763-4, women occupy a prominent position, but it is a legal and not an economic prominence. He lectured over the wide field of Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms. Under Justice he dealt with domestic law,

in relation to Roman jurisprudence. In such a view woman is a subordinate. He observes quaintly—and we may remember that he never married—"though there was little or no regard paid to women in the first state of society as objects of pleasure, yet there never was more regard paid to them as rational creatures. In North America [he is referring to the native Indians] the women are consulted concerning the carrying out of war, and in every important undertaking. The respect paid to women in modern times is very small; they are only put to no trouble for spoiling of their beauty. A man will not exempt his friend from a laborious piece of business, but he will spare his mistress" (*Lectures*, p. 76).

The conception of women as a plaything and ornament is not just a cynicism of Adam Smith. It reflects the age, and comes midway between the savages' use of women as a beast of burden and their modern position, as competitors with men in the world's work. For the advisory function of Adam Smith's Indian women was strictly incidental.

When we turn from the *Lectures* to the *Wealth of Nations*, we find numerous allusions to women. Two, which come to the mind, are the Highland woman and widows in America. "A half-starved Highland woman frequently bears more than twenty children, while a pampered fine lady is often incapable of bearing any, and is generally exhausted by two or three" (ed. Cannan, I, 81). Again in America, where labour is so well rewarded that children are a source of opulence to their parents, "a young widow with four or five young children, who, among the middling or inferior ranks of people in Europe, would have so little chance for a second husband, is (there) frequently courted as a sort of fortune" (I, 72). In both these references it is the woman as a mother of

children that draws the economist's attention. If we turn to the index itself, all that we find under Women is, "women's education contains nothing fantastical"—the passage reading: "There are no public institutions for the education of women, and there is accordingly nothing useless, absurd or fantastical in the common course of their education. They are taught what their parents or guardians judge it necessary or useful for them to learn; and they are taught nothing else. . . . In every part of her life a woman feels some conveniency or advantage from every part of her education. It seldom happens that a man, in any part of his life, derives any conveniency or advantage from some of the most laborious or troublesome parts of his education" (II, 266-7).

In fine, in the eighteenth century, woman was studied legally in relation to the authority of the husband and economically in relation to population. There was, however, no prejudice against her employment in industry. Indeed the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had a craving to set everybody to work, from infants to grandams, for as long as possible at as low a wage as possible in some form or other of productive employment; and with the industrial revolution the opportunities thereto were multiplied.

Thanks to the scholarly and comprehensive work of Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (1930), we can now view as a whole the fortunes of women workers, their conditions and earnings in the first century of the new industrialism. She presents them first in agriculture, and then in industry and trade. In the latter the sub-divisions are significantly long—textile industries, spinning and weaving; the smaller domestic industries from lace to buttons; women's work in mines and the metal trades; craftswomen and business

women. After reading this survey, we feel more than ever that the industrial revolution is well named. If the excision of an occupation once so ubiquitous as hand-spinning, and the replacement of the father, the skilled hand-weaver, working at home, by daughters working in a power-driven loom-shop be not revolution, then nothing in the economic world is. This does not commit us to the view that pre-1760 was paradise. Here the researches of Dorothy George are complementary. As the pace quickened towards the machine age, the lot of women became increasingly hard indoors and out-of-doors. Spinning by hand, tramping the country for material or with work, she toiled more and more, as production increased; and she suffered further, when domestic industry collapsed, by extrusion into industries for which she was unfitted, such as mining and coarse labour on the land. When machinery was at last general (and in weaving and knitting it was not general till the late 1840's), it brought nearly always a balance of advantage to the family. For the intensification of domestic industry was destroying the home. Only when home and workshop were separated, was it possible to regulate the workshop and re-create the home. Coal-mining, like chimney-sweeping, has a history to itself. In 1842 women's labour underground was abolished. Their employment here was not universal, but in certain districts it was of old standing, and it became grossly inhuman as the depths of mines and the intensity of exploitation increased, as well as unnecessary, since without great cost (precisely as in chimney-sweeping) machinery could be used instead. At every turn Miss Pinchbeck's study warns against hasty generalisation. If the industrial revolution widened the field of women's employment here, it also narrowed it there. In the dairy and in retail trade the women of the eighteenth

century seem to have found more satisfying careers than their emancipated sisters of a century later.

With this book to guide us let us observe the impact of the new facts on economic doctrine. We shall begin with women writers themselves, and then pass to the classical political economy, as represented by Mill and Marshall.

Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) was small of stature and all but succumbed as a child to attempts to increase her stature by mechanical devices (it was the birthday of the mechanical arts), including hanging by the neck. She was the remarkable daughter of a remarkable father —he married five times (one mock and four genuine) and invented most things from a velocipede to electric telegraphs—and she too invented something, the didactic novel. Almost at one jump she took fiction from the tempestuous realism of Smollett and Fielding into the sheltered waters of utility and virtue. She published in 1801 her *Moral Tales*. *The Prussian Vase*, "designed", in her father's words, "principally for young gentlemen who are intended for the bar", concludes with the Englishman in the story saying: "You will observe that this trial by jury, which is a matter of favour to you Prussians, is a matter of right to us Englishmen. Much as I admire your king of Prussia, I admire our English constitution more." Miss Edgeworth's biographer, Helen Zimmern, says of the *Tales*: "Like all Miss Edgeworth's writings, they found instant favour and were translated into French and German. With no desire to detract from their merits, we cannot avoid the inference that the circumstance points to a great lack of contemporary foreign fiction of a pure and attractive kind." This is a biography of 1883! The strange thing is that she really wrote considerable novels. *Castle Rackrent*, *The Absentee*, *Ennui* are thor-

oughly readable, because of their faithful and humorous portraiture of Irish life, as seen from a country hall. For, helping her father to manage his estate at Edgeworthstown in Ireland, she wrote at first hand. Scott told her that she had inspired him to do the same for Scotland in Waverley. She was the friend of Sydney Smith and of Bentham's editor Dumont, and the intimate friend of Ricardo, with whom she stayed at Gatcomb. She was, according to Mackintosh, "at one time courted by all persons of distinction in London with an avidity almost without example" (*Life* II, 262).

A few years later, to be precise in 1816, just after Ricardo and Edward West had presented to the world their laws of rent and diminishing returns, Mrs. Marcet, the wife of Dr. Marcet, published her *Conversations on Political Economy*. Of all the luscious tit-bits, two must suffice.

Caroline. But if population be constantly kept within the limits of subsistence, would it not always remain stationary?

Mrs. B. Certainly not; if the people are industrious, capital will increase; and the increase of population will follow of course, and with advantage.

Caroline. I now see evidently, that population should never be encouraged but where there is plenty of subsistence and employment (p. 150).

Caroline, you must understand, was the maiden under instruction and Mrs. B. the teacher.

But the thrill of 1815 was diminishing returns. Caroline objected to importing corn. It was better, she thought, to depend upon our own produce, but she was wrong:

Mrs. B. The more corn-land we cultivate, the higher will be the price of corn in average seasons.

> You start, Caroline [and this, be it remembered, was the age when hysteria was a feminine accomplishment] but . . . the more corn is grown in a country, the greater will be the quantity of inferior land brought into cultivation (p. 386);

and so on in the true classical style.

Mrs. Marcet had been inspired by Miss Edgeworth. For at the outset Mrs. B. observes, "If they [mothers] could convey such lessons of political economy as Miss Edgeworth gives in her story of the Cherry Orchard no one I should think would esteem such information beyond the capacity of a child" (p. 12). In turn, she inspired a lady more famous still. Miss Harriet Martineau in her *Autobiography* (I, 138) says of the *Conversations*, "I took up the book chiefly to see what political economy principally was; and great was my surprise to find that I had been teaching it unawares in my stories about machinery and wages." The outcome of 1832-4 was the series of *Tales illustrating Political Economy and Taxation* (the title of the Ricardian bible). The burden of her themes was population, the virtue of thrift and the wickedness of strikes. When she was writing the number on Population: "The perspiration [not sweat, of course] many a time streamed down my face, though I knew there was not a line of it which might not be read in any family" (I, 200). She was "tomahawked" in the *Quarterly*, but Malthus comforted her. After one number he called round to thank her for her beautiful picture of domestic felicity. What would one not give to have been present at that scene! He with his hare lip, she with her ear-trumpet; he a bachelor, she a maid; but the two, nevertheless, in such affinity that she did not need her trumpet to catch his mild and resonant vowels!

I confess with shame that I have not yet read

Political Economy for Beginners by Dame Millicent Fawcett.

As an economist John Stuart Mill is not in the rank of Adam Smith or Ricardo before him, or of Jevons and Marshall after him. But he is the pattern of all that was finest in Victorian liberalism. It is as Mill the reformer that James Bonar talks with him in his delightful portraiture of economists in Elysium (*The Tables Turned*, 1931). For the author of the *Principles of Political Economy* of 1848 was the author of the *Essay on the Subjection of Women* of 1869. One great slavery had just been abolished by the issue of the American Civil War. Another and more unholy remained. If not you, at any rate your mothers or grandmothers, will have read the *Essay*. I have perused the soiled copy in the Library of the Cambridge Union. Mill wrote (p. 26), "There is never any want of women who complain of ill-usage by their husbands." Marginal comment, "Yet the wives love those husbands who beat them most." Marginal comment on the comment, "You degraded —— fool." Mill demands complete equality, pleading for marriage as an equal partnership; and in the course of his argument pays the famous tribute to the lady who had been his wife: "Who can tell how many of the most original thoughts put forth by male writers belong to a woman by suggestion, to themselves only by verifying and working out? If I may judge by my own case a very large proportion indeed" (p. 132). And he goes on: "A man who is married to a woman his inferior in intelligence, finds her a perpetual dead-weight" (p. 166). Upon which I remember Professor Marshall observing, "I believe Mrs. Mill was a very ordinary woman, indeed." Be this as it may, Mill gave the impetus to the legal reforms which cause the Union Society's copy to be annotated again and

again with "no longer", "not now". He died in 1873 at Avignon at the height of his doctrinal influence, very near to socialism in the sphere of property and inheritance, but still passionately individualist in the sphere of personal relations. Hence arose the paradox that this great champion of women provoked a movement which for over twenty years sought to upset the protection by law of women employed in factories. From the *Essay* we turn to his *Principles* (Book V, chap. xi, sec. 9: People's Edition 1865) to read, "The classing together, for this and other purposes, of women and children, appears to me both indefensible in principle and mischievous in practice. . . . For improving the conditions of women, it should . . . be an object to give them the readiest access to independent industrial employment, instead of closing, either entirely or partially, that which is open to them." Did Mill, one wonders, seriously lament the Mines Act of 1842? The sequel you may read in Hutchins and Harrison, *History of Factory Legislation*, chap. ix, The Women's Rights Opposition. The opposition movement declared itself over the factory bill of 1873. "Exactly how and when this movement began it is difficult to say," observe the authors (*Factory Legislation*, p. 185). But with Mill saying in his *Principles* what he had always said, and with the *Essay on Subjection* as the new gage flung into the social arena, it is unnecessary surely, in this year of Mill's death, to look elsewhere for doctrinal cause. The occasion also is no less clear. It was the extension by sympathy into the industrial field of the agitation launched in 1870 by Josephine Butler against the Contagious Diseases Acts, which penalized women for the protection of men.

The opposition, though it could not upset the factory acts, delayed their application to employments where

protection was urgently needed, *e.g.* in laundries: for, whatever its intention, it was in effect, as these authors say, "a blank and unfruitful individualism." But it was the merit as well as the defect of Mill that he was utterly void of class feeling. He once told an audience of workingmen that they were liars, and they cheered him for it. Miss Millicent Garrett was at the meeting. "Did you write this?" he was asked. "I did," he replied; and "I did" won him the election. He wrote to an American friend in 1869, "The emancipation of women and cooperative production are the two great changes that will regenerate society." He had neither sex feeling nor class feeling, that is to say. Copartnership of men and women, copartnership of masters and men: for this he lived and wrote. He was a doctrinaire. And, however unfruitful such a one may be for present policy, he has a place in ultimate thought. For when men have been tamed by women, and masters have been tamed by men, will there not be a need for a partnership that is both peaceful and positive? It is easier to fight social abuses than to use society socially. I have sometimes thought that soldiers and sailors will be more content with universal peace than bodies which the world calls militant. When Joan of Arc tried to return to life, the Tommy was her only pal. The Church Militant was aghast.

Alfred Marshall in *Principles of Economics* (first edition, 1890; periodically revised to the eighth edition of 1920) makes no special contribution to the theory of women's work and wages. He notes, however: (1) that, while domestic services are increasing fast, the domestic servant is not so important, since some of her work is passing out of the home to the laundry, the hotel and tradesmen (p. 277); (2) that in attempts to estimate the value of a people, such as Sir William Petty was the first

to essay, allowance must be made, in reckoning the value of immigrants, for the unpaid services which women render as mothers, wives and sisters (p. 565*n*); (3) that as the result of machinery and new technique, the wages of women, as well as of boys and girls, are rising fast relatively to those of men—"this is a great gain, in so far as it tends to develop their faculties; but an injury in so far as it tempts them to neglect their duty of building up a true home, and of investing their efforts in the personal capital of their children's character and abilities" (p. 685); (4) that "the coming generation is interested in the rescue of men, and still more in that of women, from excessive work at least as much as it is in the handing down to it of a good stock of material wealth" (p. 694); (5) that the new restraints on free enterprise are chiefly in the interests of women and children (p. 751). This attitude I would term Victorianism ennobled. The truth is, Marshall was a knight in homespun. He was equally romantic in his conception of the business world: witness his last public address to it, *Social Possibilities of Economic Chivalry* (1907). Similarly his conception of the relation between master and disciple was an affectionate tyranny, for which they adored him. His pupils felt toward him much as Robert Owen's disciples felt toward Owen a hundred years ago.

In the early eighteen-nineties a flood of new light was thrown on the economic position of women by Miss Collet's Board of Trade Report on the Employment of Women and Girls, 1894, by the Report on the Employment of Women in the Royal Commission of Labour, 1893; as well as by the findings of the Lords' Committee on Sweating, 1890, and the Royal Commission on Secondary Education, 1895. Miss Collet reported: (1) that the employment of married women has decreased, casual

employment has diminished, and the slight increase in the employment of women and girls generally is due to the increased number of young women and girls under twenty-five with definite occupations and to the increased employment of middle-class women; (2) that "no fact comes out more clearly in this Report than that the occupations in which women and girls have been employed on work hitherto done by men or boys, are those in which the employment of the latter has increased at an abnormal rate."

In 1898, Mrs. Bosanquet, in her book of essays *The Standard of Life*, built on this new knowledge, and called for a continuation and broadening of the significant improvements that were at last taking place in women's education. Teach us, she says, not accomplishments, but real knowledge. The cure for sweated industries is the training of a race of women who are educated above the drudgery of slaving and beyond the impossible competition of the needle with the machine. If women are feared by men as a cheap substitute, make them expensive by industrial training and able thus to command more. She calls on the economists to support her in her view that there is no more a fixed quantity of work to go round than there is a fixed fund of wages.

Mrs. Bosanquet looked for progress within the atmosphere and assumptions of the established order. Mr. and Mrs. Webb in their *Industrial Democracy* (1897) launched a critique on the order itself, calling for the weapons of standardization and organization, for standardization of rates and organization of workers, female as well as male. Women, if unorganized, cannot help undermining the position of men (and the injurious result of failure to organize the women is well brought out in W. H. Warburton's *History of Trade Union Organization in the North*

Staffordshire Potteries, 1931). Subsequently in her Minority Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, 1919, Mrs. Webb carried the argument of industrial democracy to its conclusion, demanding an occupational rate, *i.e.* a standard rate for the job, whether done by men or women.

So far as I know, the first academic economist to give a special section to women's wages in a general text book was Edwin Cannan in his *Wealth* (1914). In chap. xii, "Incomes from Work", he discusses inequalities of earnings, and among the causes gives prominence to inequality due to sex. How may this inequality be diminished? First, by the better education of women; second, by the modification of consumers' demand in the direction of goods and services which women are in a favourable position to supply; third, and mainly, by the enlargement of the field of women's employment, which is at present restricted by the inertia of employers and the active opposition of male workers. The two key statements are:

"An increase of women's output, if it was confined to the employments in which women alone are at present employed, might very probably reduce their earnings by cheapening the unit of output more than the amount per head increased" (p. 207).

"It [*i.e.* the enlargement of the field] is hindered too by the cry for equal wages for men and women, as the most powerful lever for increasing the opportunities of women is taken away, if they are not allowed to do the work cheaper" (p. 206).

The implication in the second statement is controversial. But it is not tartly meant. It accords with the general view of the demand for labour which Professor Cannan expounded in his presidential address of 1932 to the Royal Economic Society. He says there in conclusion:

"The public should learn to distinguish between the false 'economy' effected by stopping quite desirable work without putting any other in its place, and the real economy effected when rates of pay are reduced so that more persons are employed and production increased" (*Economic Journal*, Sept., 1932, p. 370).

Perhaps the leading treatise on the large scale since Marshall's *Principles* is Professor Pigou's *Economics of Welfare*. At any rate the *American Economic Review* of March, 1926, reviewed the second edition of 1924 in a leading article, entitled *Economics at its Best*. Professor Pigou discusses women's wages in Part III, chapters xiv to xvii, in relation to fair wages; and I shall group the remainder of my observations around him. His analysis, however, contains in a subordinate sentence an assumption which I question. He says: "Even though women's natural endowments of mind and muscle were equal to those of men, which on the average they are not, it would be surprising" etc. (p. 564).

"Natural endowment of mind." It is possible that there is in man some sort of creative restlessness which goes to the very root of sex, but of this we know hardly anything. When I think of my own subject, Economic History, I frankly can see no inferiority. I think of such names as Mrs. Webb, Mrs. Hammond, Mrs. Knowles, Miss Bateson, Miss McArthur, Miss Power, and I cannot for one moment allow that original historical research is not as punishing and as excellent as original mathematical analysis; though I am willing to concede that both are inferior as mental accomplishment to the highest poetry and art. That there are in all fewer women than men of eminence is only natural in view of the newness of the higher education of women and the fact that for some women research may be interrupted by marriage or motherhood.

"Natural endowment of muscle." It is true that men can run faster, fight more powerfully and lift greater weights; and true also that physiologically the body of a woman, like that of a Japanese, if we compare these with Englishmen, can be kept in a state of efficiency on less food. But the mastodon perished, because it was too big. The horse is perishing, because power generated by oats in an animal frame is less effective for industry than power generated by petrol in an internal combustion engine. We live as never before in an age of power production. I sometimes fear a conclusion in which increasing millions of men will be as the horses, with this difference. Horses will survive for sport only, men will survive for sport and the dole, because being human beings they cannot be allowed to starve. Professor Cannan's point of demand changing in favour of women comes in here. There is no demand for men in housework; and in the compound form of demand for machine products there is some reason for thinking that the swing is now towards others than adult men. For machinery, as it improves, tends to become automatic and to call for minding and speed rather than for strength and creative skill. Let me give one example (not forgetting that machinery is also economizing the demand for women's labour, though not, so far as I know, in the direction of replacing it by men's). The firm of Rowntree found that in the process of rationalization they had to dispense with certain men, or boys becoming men. They tried therefore to find them other jobs. First they sent some to London, but these strayed back out of loneliness, though a few took root at Welwyn Garden City. The next step, therefore, was to bring new industries to York; and with difficulty they founded and financed there: (1) a chemical process, (2) the reconditioning of rubber, (3) the making of buttons from casein on a Dutch

process. My friend Peter Rowntree is in charge; and he has told me that he was again coming up against the old problem. These industries, which had been selected with a view to employing males, were developing as the chocolate business itself. If he kept the plant up-to-date, he might be introducing machines which displaced men. But it is objected, "Men will be employed to make the machines." I agree, but what proof is there that the new employment will approach the employment lost? I suggest that to-day the kind of wants which private enterprise knows best how to supply, are just those which make a diminishing call on the kind of labour in which male muscle is an asset; and what else but muscle in the main have, literally, millions of men to offer? We may remember that in the world's history women have done the mass of the work, in the house and in the fields; while men have gone out to hunt and fight. There is virtually no hunting left, save for sport: there are no new continents for white men to colonize: seafaring and foreign trade are in decline: we hope to abolish war, that one certain absorbent of male labour. What, then, is our final use? "Garn, don't you answer me, who earns the dole?"

Professor Pigou postpones to a later chapter the influence of wages on capacity. He is concerned initially with capacity as it is; and he distinguishes between two kinds of unfair wage:—(1) Where the employer pays less than the employee is worth to him. This is called "exploitation" wage, and I return to it later. (2) Where owing to ignorance or obstacles to mobility, the wages in one industry are out of line with those in others. And here enters a special point about women's wages. For a wage, fair as between women in different industries, may be unfair as between men and women in a given industry.

Now wages are fair, not when they are equal in money,

but when they are proportional to efficiency, and apart altogether from differences of natural ability we must expect the wages of women to be less than those of men, for a variety of reasons: most of their work is easily learnt, repetitive work; it is normally interrupted by marriage; it is not supported by so good an education. However, if there is free movement between industries, we may expect a situation in which some occupations are entirely male, some entirely female; and others partly male and partly female. The last is the test group; and here wages will tend to be proportionate to efficiency, as the result of substitution between men and women. Piece rates, as they allow for differences of efficiency, will tend to be equal for men and women. Unfairness, however, would not exist here, if men apparently on the same job got higher pay, because they can be used for other work in an emergency or at night, or because they are easier for a male employer to discipline (easier to "swear at", Professor Pigou suggests), or because they economize machinery by doing the job in less time: and so on.

But unfairness will arise if, by custom or trade union pressure, or the decision of government in public employments, the entry of women into a trade is restricted. In this case a wage, fair with regard to men within the privileged trade, will be unfair with regard to women outside it. Should women in such a case hold out for the higher wage? He inclines, I gather, to the negative; for if they do, women will be tempted to crowd around the privileged job, without power to enter it, so that there will be a waste through the enforced idleness of women vaguely attached to the industry but not definitely employed in it. And he quotes with approval Mr. Cannan's remark about enlarging the field of employment by the lever of cheapness.

These circumstances, he seems to consider, are respon-

sible for the main differences between men's and women's wages. And he dismisses as "very superficial", "the common idea that women are paid less than men because men's wages have in general to support a family, while women's wages have only to support the women themselves" (p. 564). We may grant this for the bulk of competitive industry. But in the case of the educational profession, if the authorities who allot the funds share this "common idea", will not the lower salaries of women be due in part to this belief?

Then there is a further point. Is there not something essentially parasitical in wages paid to a girl who is partly supported at home? No, he replies, not if the alternatives are being employed in some other trade at the same rate or not being employed at all. True parasitism arises when the wage in one industry is less than in others for work of the same type.

This brings us back to the question of exploitation, in case (1) above. Such exploitation may arise through the facts that workers, male or female, are unorganized, or are so poor that they have no bargaining power, or live at home in isolation, or are employed casually. These handicaps are present cumulatively in the class of industries which the late nineteenth century knew as sweated industries, and they were largely recruited from women. To check the exploitation, trade boards were established in 1909, and a minimum wage was established by law. In 1915 the machinery was extended from trades in which wages were *exceptionally* low to trades in which the workers were unorganized and the wages *unduly* low. This set up a new criterion, which was in harmony with the demand that arose after the war for the public guarantee of a decent existence. The great rise in the cost of living made the living wage a lively issue, especially in Aus-

tralia, where most wages are the subject of official awards; and it involved the question of male and female, when the wage was to be based on what would suffice to support in decency a man with a normal family. In 1924, Miss Eleanor Rathbone focussed the issue in her study *The Disinherited Family*. The normal family, she urged, is a statistical fiction. What modern society wants is a minimum wage; sufficient for two adults, and supplemented by family allowances for children, as were the separation allowances of the war. She appealed to the example of the mining industry in France and Belgium.

In England, she argues, two problems among others must be faced. The first is "Who is to bear the cost?" She replies, the industry or the state: and adds, "as in the long run the allowances must come out of the product of industry, the question whether they do so directly or are passed through the National Exchequer seems one of method rather than of principle" (p. 276). This was a too easy generalization from war-time experience, when unemployment did not exist. To take out enormous sums from industry and pass it through the National Exchequer to the recipients is a task of great complication, liable to all manner of unintended consequences, and of a difficulty proportionate to the intensity of the taxation and the amount of the contributions passing already through the channel of the state. The two latter, because of unemployment, have mounted steeply since 1924. What will be the attitude of labour? She argues against opponents in this quarter by retorting that they would "take the sting out of poverty for the easygoing individuals whose misfortunes are half their own fault, while the bulk of the working-class mothers, proud, sensitive and self-reliant, are left to struggle with their impossible task of making bricks

without clay" (p. 303). She does not suffer gladly the "Turk" complex in man, be he of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie.

The late Professor Edgeworth, who gave the presidential address to Section F of the British Association at Hull in, 1922, on "Equal Pay to Men and Women for Equal Work", and whose approach resembles in method and conclusion that of Professor Pigou, stressed the distributional aspect of the Family Endowment programme. Much of the popularity which the scheme enjoys in labour circles (he said) is probably due to the prospect of transferring hundreds of millions from the income-tax paying classes to the families of working-people" (*Economic Journal*, 1922, p. 453). But if redistribution only is desired, "it is open to any association of men, a trades union for example, to resolve that each member of the association should contribute a quota of his earnings towards the formation of a fund which is to be distributed among the wives of members in accordance with the size of the families" (*ibid.*, p. 457). It is only necessary to put it thus to see that it would not, indeed could not be accepted. I suggest that the success of the principle in France and Belgium was more apparent than real. It saved wages for employers. It arose in a period of rapid currency inflation, when without family assistance workers with large families would have suffered extreme privation. And this is not England's problem even now.

I conclude with a reference to Mr. H. G. Wells' chapter on women in his *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1932). For statistically it is still true, as it was in Miss Collet's day, that the increased employment of women is not a main cause of the increased unemployment of men. He says: "If the pre-war rates of employment held to-day there would be about a hundred thousand

more men and about a hundred thousand less women employed. That is all. A large part of the increased industrial employment of women has nothing to do with men; it is a transfer of women from domestic to industrial life, because work that was formerly done in the home, laundry work, sewing, baking, urban lunch and tea services, is now supplied outside" (p. 532).

All, then, that I am justified in contending (and the contention, I grant, is open to dispute) is that the trend is in favour of women, in so far as machinery sets the pace of employment. And whether I am right or wrong here, I should oppose withdrawing women in order to give men a chance. The first thing in the present crisis is to secure work and wages, whether by the man or the woman, in order that as much as possible of the national income may pass to the working-class family in the form of wages earned and not of allowances granted. In the long run the interest of men and women must be complementary, because, unlike the factor of machinery, they are living members of an abiding reality, the human family. I do not wish to appear a pessimist. I do hold, however, that the problem which society has not yet mastered is the problem of power production and of finance in relation to this. I agree fundamentally with the diagnosis of Fred Henderson in his *Economic Consequences of Power Production* (1931). The world is up against a monstrous paradox. There was, first, the tyranny of human slavery. A second tyranny Mill helped to destroy. The third and final tyranny it remains for us to dispel, or to beg a humble pardon from the prophetic author of *Erewhon*.

GOLDWIN SMITH

FRANK H. UNDERHILL

IT is now twenty-three years since Goldwin Smith died. During his career, both in England and in Canada, he was engaged in almost continuous controversy; and during the last thirty-nine years of his life he resided in a city which, while it respected him highly for his attainments, abhorred his political views and never made much attempt to understand him. Though he had been a Regius Professor of History, his own writings were mostly in the nature of journalism, and they are already largely forgotten by Canadians, who, as inveterate newspaper readers, are a people with short memories. His secretary, Mr. Arnold Haultain, who was his literary executor, has left us the only attempt at a full-length portrait that we have; it was painted when Mr. Haultain was smarting a little from a sense of ill-treatment, and it shows much more concentration upon the warts than upon the rest of the face. Besides, no man was ever more completely unfitted by temperament for understanding the real elements of Goldwin Smith's greatness than was Mr. Haultain. He had a naive instinctive admiration for everything which his chief detested. He bubbled with enthusiasm for the Chamberlainite imperialism of the late 1890's and early 1900's, and he believed firmly that Rudyard Kipling was a poet.

It seems therefore worth while, even though the issue between Cobden and Chamberlain is not yet settled in the British Empire, to survey afresh the development of Goldwin Smith's ideas. The more difficult task of estimating his influence in Canada I shall not attempt. I suspect that his real influence is yet to

come, and will be exercised upon those Canadian historians who settle down to study the Canada of 1867 to 1914, who fall under the spell of the Bystander and come to see how shrewd were his comments upon current events, how enlightening his criticism of the nature of Canadian nationality, and how far-reaching his conception of the place of Canada in the English-speaking world.

Goldwin Smith was born in 1823, the son of a well-to-do physician in Reading. He received the typical training of the English scholar and gentleman of his day. He was sent to Eton in 1836, went up to Oxford in 1841, and won his B.A. in 1845. A brilliant classical student, he became on graduation a candidate for a fellowship at Queen's. But already he was marked out as a coming man in the little group of reformers in the University, and he was defeated for the fellowship by an obscure rival who was supported by the ecclesiastical party in the college.

This was the beginning for him of a struggle in which he was to play a part for the next twenty years in the University. Oxford was then almost entirely under clerical control, and it was only beginning to awake from the long intellectual torpor of the eighteenth century. Academical duty, Goldwin Smith tells us in his *Reminiscences*, was lost in the theological fray. The great question in his student days was, of course, the controversy over Newman. Looking back on it in his old age he declared that "the confluence of Newmanism with Romanism seems as natural as the confluence of two drops of water on a window-pane, and perhaps fraught with consequences little more momentous to humanity". But in the 1840's and 1850's he threw himself vigorously into the efforts of the little group of liberal reformers who were fighting against both Newman

and his opponents, who were striving to emancipate Oxford altogether from its ecclesiastical atmosphere and its clerical control, and as he put it himself, to restore it to the nation. After the failure at Queen's he won a fellowship at University College. In 1850 he was appointed assistant-secretary of the Royal Commission of Inquiry which the reformers succeeded in having set up; and he served also as secretary of the later Parliamentary Commission which drafted the legislation of 1854 and so made the first breach in ecclesiastical monopoly. The long and bitter struggle against the ecclesiastical party in the University coloured all his later thinking. He became a zealot for the removal of privileges and especially of religious privileges; he preached the separation of Church and State, and he continued to be a passionate anti-clerical all his life.

His connection with the Royal and Parliamentary commissions introduced him to London society and to public life there. For some time he read law. In 1855 he became a member of the staff of the newly founded *Saturday Review* and began to distinguish himself as a political and literary controversialist. An admirer of Peel, he went with the Peelites to the Liberal side of politics after the great disruption over the Corn Laws. In 1858, while still a young man of thirty-five years, he was elected Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford; and he returned to active work in the University, already a marked man on the liberal side both in the internal academic politics of Oxford itself and in the wider field of national affairs.

How Goldwin Smith conceived his function of professor of history is somewhat difficult to judge. His inaugural lecture in 1859 presents the honours History school as a discipline in preparing young men of the

upper classes for public life. That it should be also a discipline for the training of scholars, of historians, does not seem to have been part of his ambition. He himself never settled down to research, and he has left behind him no great work which recreates and reinterprets for us a past period of history. Sometimes one is bound to wonder whether he would not have been a happier man had he devoted his life to his favourite period of early seventeenth century Puritan England and anticipated the work of those later heroes of research, successors of his in the Oxford chair, Professors Gardiner and Firth.

In 1861 the American Civil War broke out. It is evident now that the Civil War was the turning point in Goldwin Smith's life. As a leader among the liberals at Oxford he was already tending apparently to become more and more immersed in current controversies; perhaps he was finding the ecclesiastical and conservative tone of the University more and more uncongenial and was beginning to long for a wider sphere of activity. The American struggle produced a sharp cleavage of opinion in England. "Society" in general, the governing classes and the Church, violently espoused the cause of the South; and their chief journalistic organ, the London *Times*, set itself to stir up ill-will between England and the North. On the other side stood Cobden and Bright and the Manchester liberals, a few prominent intellectuals like John Stuart Mill, and the industrial masses of northern England. Goldwin Smith with a small group of Oxford, Cambridge and London dons, joined the Manchester men. But they were a very small minority in the society among which they moved.

Smith, who perhaps had a congenital tendency for finding himself on the minority side, was stirred as he had never been before. He became a pamphleteer. He

began to deliver lectures before great public audiences in London and in the North. This activity brought him into personal contact with Cobden and Bright and the other members of the Manchester School, and he quickly found in their midst, rather than at Oxford, his spiritual home. In 1864 he went out to visit America, more or less as an official delegate from those sections of the English public who had taken the side of the North. The Regius Professor of Oxford, bearing a message of goodwill from the English democracy to the Northern democracy of the United States, was fêted and received with honour wherever he went in the States. He came back to England confirmed in his belief that in America was the hope of the English-speaking race. The tremendous popular success of his American visit and the revelation of the intensity of anti-American and anti-democratic feeling among the English governing classes caused him to look more and more longingly across the Atlantic.

The direction in which his mind was moving during these Civil War years is shown in his private letters. Thus in 1864, before his American visit, he writes to Charles Eliot Norton: "For my own part I have fairly thought my way out of social and political Feudalism and out of the State Church which is its religious complement; and my intellect and heart are entirely with those who are endeavouring to found a great community on the sounder as well as the happier basis of social justice and free religious convictions". He gives a fuller revelation of his mind in a speech which he delivered at Boston in the course of his tour. It shows a Goldwin Smith to which later Canadians are hardly accustomed, not the sarcastic and destructive critic but the preacher expounding his faith in a mood of the highest exaltation.

"To America, though an alien by birth, I am, as an English Liberal, no alien in heart. . . . England bore you, and bore you not without a mother's pangs. For the real hour of your birth was the English Revolution of the seventeenth century, at once the saddest and the noblest period of English history. . . . In England the Revolution of the seventeenth century failed. It failed, at least, as an attempt to establish social equality and liberty of conscience. The feudal past, with a feudal Europe to support it, sat too heavy on us to be cast off. . . . The nation had gone a little way out of the feudal and hierarchical Egypt; but the horrors of the unknown wilderness and the memory of the fleshpots overpowered the hope of the Promised Land; and the people returned to the rule of Pharaoh and his priests amid the bonfires of the Restoration. . . . But the yoke which in the mother country we had not the strength to throw off, in the colony we escaped; and here, beyond the reach of the Restoration, Milton's vision proved true, and a free community was founded. . . . Yet in England the party of Cromwell and Milton still lives. It still lives; and in this great crisis of your fortunes, its heart turns to you. On your success ours depends. Now as in the seventeenth century the thread of our fate is twined with the thread of yours. An English Liberal comes here, not only to watch the unfolding of your destiny, but to read his own. . . . The soldiers of the Union are not Puritans, neither are the planters Cavaliers. But the present civil war is a vast episode in the same irrepressible conflict between Aristocracy and Democracy. . . . The England of Charles and Laud has been against you; the England of Hampden, Milton and Cromwell is on your side."

While his mind was full of conceptions such as these, there occurred an event in his personal life which was

decisive for his future. In 1866 his father, who had long retired from practice and was living as a country gentleman near Reading, suffered an injury in a railway accident, which produced a mental derangement. Goldwin Smith, a devoted son, was the only member of the family free and able to look after him. He threw up his professorship at Oxford and for two years was in almost daily attendance upon his father. Then he was compelled to leave home for a couple of days to attend to some business about a property in the north of England. While he was away his father committed suicide. The shock prostrated the son, and it was a long time before he fully recovered from it. The tragedy made all his old associations in England seem unbearable. Just at this time he met Andrew White, who invited him to join his staff in the newly created Cornell University. Smith accepted the invitation and came to America in 1868.

Life in the little rural village in northern New York confirmed him in his belief in the esential soundness of the American democratic experiment; and he was often accustomed in later years to contrast his own experience of the American people with that of the hypercritical English visitors who saw only the unlovely side of American democracy in the big cities. But apparently he found the task of teaching the very immature students of Cornell not altogether congenial. At any rate in 1871 he moved north to Toronto and settled here among relatives, continuing to go back periodically to Cornell to give courses of lectures. In 1875 he married Mrs. Boulton, the mistress of the Grange, and became a Torontonian for the rest of his life.

Several times during his early years on this side of the ocean he was invited back to England to enter

politics on the Liberal side, and was offered safe constituencies in the North. He was invited to come back to Oxford as Master of University College. Later on, when the Home Rule struggle was at its height in the 1880's, the Unionist Liberals invited him to come back and lend his voice in Parliament against the dismemberment of the United Kingdom, a cause about which he became almost as passionate as he had been in his preaching against the dismemberment of the American Union. But he resisted all temptations and remained in Canada. He must often, when being bitterly reviled in Toronto for his political views, have looked back with some regret to the career that a man with his intellectual abilities might have had in Oxford and in England. He was keenly conscious of the narrow stage upon which Canadian actors must play their part and of the limited audience before whom they perform. He was to learn to his sorrow that the influence which an intellectual can exercise in Canadian public affairs is severely limited. For in Canada there is little of that personal intercourse between practical statesmen and University dons which is a unique and charming feature of English life, raising the intellectual level of politics and saving the Universities from becoming the breeding ground of Ph.D's.

Before he left England Goldwin Smith had published another work, which, on the whole, seems to me to be the finest thing he ever wrote and which has been rather undeservedly forgotten. The Trent incident at the end of 1861, with its threat of war between England and the Northern States, raised the question of how Canada should be defended. In the spring of 1862 the Canadian legislature unceremoniously threw out a Militia Bill which had been drafted under the advice of Imperial staff officers; and the sequel was a long and acrimonious

controversy between colony and mother country, which was carried on both in official despatches and in newspaper editorials. The defence crisis, coming on top of Canada's protective tariff of 1859, accentuated the tendency in England to discuss separation as the ultimate goal to which the colonies were inevitably drifting. Goldwin Smith entered the discussion with a series of letters to the chief liberal London paper, the *Daily News*. He gathered the letters together in a book entitled *The Empire*, which he published in 1863. They form the most perfect embodiment that we have of the imperial, or rather anti-imperial, doctrines of the Manchester school. They are written in what is for him a buoyant and high-spirited tone; for the writer believed that he was expressing the opinions of the most intelligent Englishmen whose minds were not biassed by special interest.

The Empire is full of the usual Manchester arguments about the extravagance of maintaining colonies who close their markets to the products of the mother-country and make no contribution to imperial defence. But it is more interesting to us to-day for the leading idea which runs through the book, the conception of Canada as potentially a new nation in a New World. "England", he writes, "has long promised herself the honour of becoming the mother of free nations. Is it not time that the promise should be fulfilled? . . . We are keeping the Colonies in a perpetual state of political infancy, and preventing the gristle of their frames from being matured and hardened into bone. . . . We have given them all that we really have to give—our national character, our commercial energy, our aptitude for law and government, our language. We have given them the essence of our constitution—free legislation, self-taxation, ministerial responsibility, personal liberty, trial

by jury. The accidents of that constitution—the relics of the feudal world in which it was wrought—we can no more give them than we can give them our history or our skies. England is a European aristocracy, Canada is an American democracy. . . . I am no more against Colonies than I am against the solar system. I am against dependencies, when nations are fit to be independent. . . . But grant that Canada cannot stand as a nation by herself, it is with a nation in America, not with a nation in Europe, that she must ultimately blend. . . . And while she remains a province, Canada is, in fact, insensibly blending with the United States. . . . As a province she cannot form the independent character or assume the clear lineaments of a nation. . . . There is but one way to make Canada impregnable, and that is to fence her round with the majesty of an independent nation".

Was it not a cruel joke of fate that the man who dreamed this splendid vision of an independent Canadian nation should have been destined to live thirty-nine years in Toronto, the home of the United Empire Loyalists and the Loyal Orange Lodges?

But while he called upon Canada to undertake the responsibility of nationhood, Goldwin Smith did not mean that colonial nationality should involve the complete breaking of the tie with the mother country. "What is proposed is, not that Canada shall cease to be a Colony of England, but that she shall cease to be a dependency . . . Is there any reason why, after the separation of the Governments, natives of Canada should not still be allowed, on coming to reside within the pale of English law, to become British citizens, to acquire all kinds of property, and to exercise, if otherwise duly qualified, all political rights? Is there any reason why Canada should not keep the old flag, with such difference

as the Heralds' College may require? . . . These cravings for a grand unity are destined to find their fulfilment in the moral and intellectual, rather than in the political sphere."

The truth is that the new British Commonwealth of Nations which we have been working out since 1914 bears a remarkable resemblance to the ideas of the Manchester men in the 1860's. They saw far more clearly than their successors, the Imperialists of the 1880's and 1890's, the one essential fact, the fact of colonial nationality; and they welcomed it gladly. They did not believe that the young colonial nations could indefinitely remain within the political orbit of Great Britain. They did not believe that colonial nationality was compatible with the political centralization of the empire. We have retained more of the political and legal ties than they thought possible, especially the tie of the Crown. But most of these are now the harmless playthings of constitutional lawyers. The despised Manchester men have turned out to be much better prophets of the future course of Imperial development than either Disraeli or Chamberlain.

Though he preached the gospel of Canadian nationality as against a colonial dependence upon England, it is clear from several passages in *The Empire* and in other writings that already before he left England Smith was impressed with the idea that the natural destiny of Canada was absorption in the United States. But he arrived in Canada in 1871 just when the country (or rather perhaps that part of it which centred about Toronto and Montreal) was in the first flush of national enthusiasm after the achievement of Confederation. Several leading public men, among them Alexander Galt on the Conservative side and L. S. Huntingdon on the

Liberal side, were talking openly about independence. There was a feeling in the air, which was quickly sensed by the Oxford Professor still alert for the potentialities of the New World, that great deeds were about to be performed, that all things were possible now that Canadian public men had shown their capacity to rise out of the muck of party politics and to join hands in creating "a new nationality".

The first result of this national impulse in the literary field was the launching, in January, 1872, of *The Canadian Monthly and National Review.* "It is hoped", said the publishers, "that the effort to give an organ, in the form of a periodical, to the intellectual life of Canada, is now made under better auspices than before. There has been of late a general awakening of national life, which has probably extended to the literary and scientific sphere, and special circumstances have favoured the publishers in obtaining literary assistance in the conduct of their Magazine". The special circumstances consisted in the arrival of Goldwin Smith in Toronto. He joined heartily in the new venture. In the second number of the *Canadian Monthly* appears the first article under the pen-name which was to become so famous in Canada—"A Bystander". Very soon he was contributing a regular feature in the journal, a monthly commentary on current affairs, which he kept up, along with other contributors, till the end of 1874. He assisted in other ways also. We find him writing to Professor Max Müller of Oxford, asking him to procure some German stories which could be published in translation in the new magazine. "They hope," he writes in explaining the new venture to his friend, "to stop the process which is at present going on of intellectual annexation to the United States."

More important than this activity was another with

which Goldwin Smith soon became connected. In Toronto a group of young romantics launched the "Canada First" movement, and sought the counsel and guidance of the Oxford professor who had so distinguished himself in England by his advocacy of Canadian nationality. The young men of "Canada First" were never quite sure whether their watch-word meant political independence or not, and whether their function was to liberalize the Liberal party, or to found a new third party, or merely to help in creating a deeper consciousness of the implications of the new nationality among the community at large. But in 1874 they founded the National Club in Toronto, and Goldwin Smith became its first president. Edward Blake seemed to be their obvious political leader, and his great Aurora speech of 1874 with its declaration that we are "four millions of Britons who are not free", was taken up by them with enthusiasm. What they welcomed especially was Blake's tendency to discuss the broader issues of Canadian affairs and to emancipate himself from mere party warfare.

In April, 1874, appeared the first number of a new weekly journal in Toronto, *The Nation*, started as the organ of "Canada First" to preach the new nationalism. In January, 1875, Goldwin Smith dropped his connection with the *Canadian Monthly*, which now seemed fairly launched, and joined *The Nation*, becoming one of its chief editorial writers. But already the "Canada First" movement had been causing alarm in the minds of the regular party leaders and journals; and the *Globe* and *Mail*, the two party dailies in Toronto, united to crush it. The *Globe* was especially ferocious in its attacks because it feared that Blake, if he listened to the blandishments of "Canada First", might lead off a large section of the Reformers in a break from the Brown-Mackenzie

fold. A convenient method of intimidating Blake was to attack the Oxford professor; and upon Goldwin Smith through 1874 and 1875 it poured out its wrath. He was accused, when he discussed independence as the manifest destiny of Canada, of furthering a cause which meant simply revolution, of advocating a policy which would put in jeopardy the material, social and religious interests of every individual in the Dominion; and his accuser announced that he was worthy of "a traitor's trial and a traitor's doom." Smith and his friends replied vigorously in the *Nation*, claiming the right to free discussion, denouncing the attempt to crush political independence by personal slander, and vaunting their determination to rescue Toronto from the journalistic despotism of George Brown. In the spring of 1875 the Blake section of the Reformers started a daily paper, *The Liberal*, in opposition to the *Globe* in Toronto, and Smith lent his pen occasionally to this journal also. But the *Globe*, or some other influence, was effective. The *Liberal* petered out after a few months. Blake returned to party orthodoxy and became a member of the Mackenzie cabinet. And the "Canada First" movement gradually disintegrated. The *Nation*, its organ, ceased publication in the fall of 1876.

Goldwin Smith was discouraged and disgusted. He was never afterwards quite able to forgive Blake for what seemed to him, as he looked back, the desertion under fire of the one political movement in Canada that showed promise of raising the intellectual and moral level of Canadian public life, and of turning the country's attention to something more significant than the ignoble struggle of party machines for the spoils of office. Smith, as all his life showed, was easily discouraged and disgusted. After the failure of "Canada First" he reached

the conclusion, which was fortified by all his later experience, that the Canadian people simply hadn't in them the capacity for making a nation.

Nevertheless, he still looked forward to playing an active part in the community of which he was now a citizen. In the middle of the 1870's he was thinking seriously of seeking a seat in the Ontario Legislature so that he could get into closer touch with the real daily life of the ordinary Canadian. Sir John Macdonald, with whom, in spite of the Pacific Scandal, he was on terms of friendly intimacy through the 1870's, encouraged him in this idea and held out hopes that he might become Minister of Education when the conservatives succeeded, as John A. Macdonald was sure they were just on the point of doing, in ousting Oliver Mowat from office. In 1878 Smith supported Macdonald in the campaign for the National Policy, and spoke at one of the campaign meetings. It is significant that he welcomed the National Policy, though he was a good disciple of Adam Smith and Richard Cobden, because it was a declaration of national tariff autonomy in opposition to the tendency, of which he thought Brown and Mackenzie were guilty, to curry favour with British industrialists and the British Government.

In the meantime he was still active in journalism. Apparently he ceased to write for the *Nation* early in 1876, several months before it gave up the ghost. But in April, 1876, he was helping John Ross Robertson to start the *Evening Telegram*. "The *Telegram*", its editor announced to his readers, "is a newspaper. It has no political axes to grind. In the bickerings and animosities of factions it takes no part. In the schemes and plots of politicians it has no share." To the *Telegram* in its early months the Bystander contributed frequent long letters

which were really special articles on various subjects of Canadian public interest. Goldwin Smith and Sir Alexander Galt were the *Telegram's* two chief heroes in those days because of their independent stand in politics. Volume One, Number Fourteen, of the paper devotes almost one page (five solid columns) to reproducing an article of Goldwin Smith—on "The Immortality of the Soul." In September, 1876, the Bystander was writing letters to the editor entitled "Is Protection the Real Remedy?" and arguing for closer trade relations with the United States.

There is an interesting letter from Goldwin Smith in the *Telegram* of October 2, 1876, on the occasion of the demise of *The Nation*, in which he gives his somewhat gloomy conclusions about native Canadian periodicals. He points out what he was to repeat very often later on, that Quebec severs Ontario from the Maritimes not only in a political but also in a literary sense, and that the only market to which a high-class Canadian journal can look is Ontario and the English district about Montreal. *The Nation* had failed because it could not command a large enough market to meet the competition of English journals, and, what was far more formidable, of the periodical literature of the United States, under the most spirited and skilful management in the world. "Nothing can sustain the Canadian publishers against such competition except the prevalence of a patriotic feeling, of pride and interest in native productions; and if such a feeling exists neither I nor the publishers with whom I have been connected have been able to discern it."

Nevertheless, he continued to the end of his life in his stubborn effort to foster high-class independent journalism in Canada. In 1880 he began his own little personal magazine, *The Bystander*, with its motto "Not

party but the people", in which perhaps is to be found his best Canadian writing. *The Bystander* ran as a monthly through 1880 and the first half of 1881, was dropped then, while he went on a visit home to England, and was revived as a quarterly for the year 1883. On December 6th, 1883, appeared the first number of *The Week*, "an independent journal of Literature, Politics and Criticism", edited at the beginning by Charles G. D. Roberts. Goldwin Smith was part owner of *The Week* and he ceased publication of his *Bystander* at the end of 1883 to take up under the same pen-name a weekly feature of the new journal, two or three columns on *Current Affairs*. Like its most distinguished contributor *The Week* stood in favour of Canadian independence and was highly critical of both Canadian political parties, though not as despondent about party government in general as was *The Bystander*.

Later in the 1880's *The Week* came under new control and turned against Goldwin Smith's ideas about the political destiny of Canada. So in 1889, when the campaign for better trade relations with United States was at its height, he revived his *Bystander* to fill what he thought a dangerous gap in the advocacy of Commercial Union, and twelve numbers of a new series of *The Bystander* appeared from October 1889 to September 1890.

But this was not the end of his journalistic efforts. In 1896, now an old man of seventy-three, he was induced by a group of young radical friends to join in yet another venture. The *Weekly Sun*, the organ of the Patrons of Industry, was in financial difficulties owing to the disintegration of Patronism among the Ontario farmers. Goldwin Smith already had a connection with Ontario farm movements through his part in the Commercial Union campaign which had been much more popular

among the farmers than among the protected industries of Toronto and other urban centres. He bought a controlling interest in the *Sun* and the familiar pen-name of the Bystander appeared once more. From 1896 he continued to write from one to three columns regularly for the front page of the *Weekly Sun*, until his wife's death at the end of 1909 and his own accident early in 1910 made further writing impossible.

What effect did all this journalistic writing have upon Canadian intellectual life? We must remember that at the same time Goldwin Smith was writing books of one kind or another, his *Cowper* and his *Jane Austen* in the English Men of Letters series, his *Canada and the Canadian Question*, his *Essays on Questions of the Day*, his *Irish History and the Irish Question*, his political histories of the United States and of Great Britain, various booklets on religious questions, not to mention a host of articles in English journals like the *Fortnightly* and the *Nineteenth Century*, letters to the London *Times* and the New York *Sun*, letters and book reviews in Godkin's New York *Nation*; and a good part of this material must also have reached many of his Canadian audience.

No one to-day can read for long in Canadian journalism from the 1870's to the early 1900's without realizing how much higher a standard of writing the Bystander provided than most of his Canadian contemporaries. His comments on current affairs have behind them a rich store of historical knowledge upon which the writer constantly draws, and they show a range of interest which was lamentably lacking then, as it is lacking to-day, in Canadian journalism. He took his readers not only into Canadian politics but into American and British and continental European affairs as well. He could discuss Gladstone and Salisbury

familiarly as men whom he had known as equals, and could deal with men like Morley, Chamberlain, Rosebery, Asquith and Balfour as mere juniors. He lived to write obituary notices of all the great Victorians, and some of these magisterial criticisms, perhaps more than anything else in his writings, make one feel what a difference there was between the imported standards of London and Oxford and the native standards of Toronto. But the outstanding feature of his political writing is that he saw contemporary politics as only part of a world-wide intellectual movement. The breakdown of the old religious beliefs, the rise of science, the movement of feminism ("the sexual revolution", as he used to call it), the onward sweep of new socialistic movements in Europe, the slow drift of his own peaceful Victorian civilization into the madness of a world-war, all these deeper under-currents of human affairs drew his interest; and over against them he set the dismal pettiness of our parochial Canadian politics. To a modern reader the Bystander's writing shines out amidst the Canadian journalism of his day in somewhat the same way as Burke's speeches shine out amidst the windy oratory of the late eighteenth century in England. Let us put down at least this to his credit that he paid his Ontario audience the compliment of believing that they were capable of appreciating the highest English culture.

About the style of his writing, as distinct from the matter of it, one need not say much. "Style", he said once, when asked how he achieved the austere simplicity and clarity which is the mark of his prose, "Style! I have no style, I merely wait for the mud to settle." There is not much Canadian journalistic writing which shows any sign of its author's having waited for the mud to settle.

But, of course, what Goldwin Smith is best remem-

bered for in Canada, is the body of doctrine as to Canada's destiny which he preached month in and month out. There are three or four main ideas around which all his journalistic writing is built. One is that of Canadian independence from Britain, to which reference has already been made. After 1870 this Manchester doctrine was gradually replaced in England by the movements for Imperial Federation and an Imperial Zollverein. Smith would have nothing to do with either movement. Again and again he called upon the Federationists to produce a concrete scheme so that it would be possible to discuss it. Again and again he pointed out that there was no hope of Canada's being induced to give up her control of trade to any Imperial body and that she showed no signs of being willing to undertake the greater defence obligations which closer Imperial union would involve. Especially did he object to the anti-American tendencies of these projects. "There is a federation which is feasible, and, to those who do not measure grandeur by physical force or extension, at least as grand as that of which the Imperialist dreams. It is the moral federation of the whole English-speaking race throughout the world, including all those millions of men speaking the English language in the United States, and parted from the rest only a century ago by a wretched quarrel."

In a closer Imperial union, then, he saw no future. Every year he became more convinced that the real destiny of Canada lay rather in a closer union, commercial and political, with her neighbour upon this continent. The failure of "Canada First", the continuing cleavage between French and English, the geographical sectionalism of the country, all combined to make him pessimistic about the possibility of our achieving a separate nationality of our own upon this continent. Curiously

enough, the development which made this a fixed idea in his mind was the building of the C.P.R., an exploit to which we look back now as the most magnificent expression in our history of our national faith in ourselves. Goldwin Smith, on the contrary, believed that the taking into Confederation of the great distant stretches of western prairie and of the still more distant province of British Columbia had produced a geographical structure in which no real unity was possible, and that the attempt to bind these vast territories together by the C.P.R. would bankrupt the country, and was only an over-ambitious scheme of Imperialist knights to carry out the project of attaching Canada to the Old World and making out of her an anti-American, anti-democratic Empire.

And this inescapable sectional and racial division of the country had its effect, as he was forever pointing out, in the party politics which developed after 1867. Macdonald kept things going by an unscrupuous policy of corruption, bribing first one section and then another, with special grants and public works. Unfortunately, such a policy was the only one possible in a country whose sections had so little in common. In his *Canada and the Canadian Question* Goldwin Smith quotes with relish the reply of a citizen of British Columbia of whom he had inquired what his politics were, and who answered promptly "Government Appropriations". "Not Cavour or Bismarck", he writes of Macdonald in another place, "is more fitted for his special task than he (Macdonald). He has always had to deal with what have happily been called sinister interests. When he is gone, who will take his place? What shepherd is there who knows his sheep or whose voice the sheep know? Who else could make Orangemen vote for Papists and induce half the members

for Ontario to help in levying on their province the necessary blackmail for Quebec? Yet this is the work which will have to be done if a general breakup is to be averted. When the shears of fate cut the thread of Sir John Macdonald's life what bond of union will be left?" Briefly, of course, the answer to this pessimistic analysis of the means by which Canadian unity was maintained was that when Macdonald disappeared the Providence which watched over the destinies of the Canadian people could be trusted to produce a Laurier who was equally adept in the politics of "Government Appropriations".

So he stood for Continental Union because geographical sectionalism and racial and religious divisions made the smaller national union of Canada impracticable. Always, be it remembered, he repudiated the word "Annexation" with its suggestion of compulsion. The union he wished was one which would be freely and voluntarily entered into by both parties, like the Union of Scotland and England, and one to which he believed the mother country would give her blessing. That the disruption of the existing union with Great Britain would mean a breaking of old associations and a destruction of the continuity of our national life such as Canadians were not willing to contemplate he never grasped. "I look forward", said Principal Grant of Queen's, "to the happy reunion of our race with as much longing as Dr. Goldwin Smith, but to begin it with a second disruption is out of the question". That was the point which Goldwin Smith could not appreciate.

The controversy with Principal Grant, the last of many such controversies on this subject, took place in 1896, in the pages of the *Canadian Magazine*. By this time Goldwin Smith was an old man and had become

more and more melancholy. He saw his own native country drifting, as it seemed to him, into the lowest type of demagogery under Gladstone and then under Chamberlain, and the English democracy of which he had once had high hopes turning to confiscatory socialism. He called in vain for a Peel to appear and rally all the moderate elements of the community about him. At the same time the United States drifted into bimetallism and Bryanism. "The American Commonwealth", he told his farmer readers in the *Weekly Sun* in 1896, "is the greatest experiment ever made in popular government. The fate of popular government in all countries, notably in our own, must be largely decided by its result. . . . Bimetallism, even repudiation is not the greatest factor in this crisis. All the elements of distress, disaffection, revolution and anarchy have for the first time banded themselves together against the life of a Commonwealth which is founded on property and the vital principle of which is liberty under the law". But when the republic escaped the peril of Bryanism it was only to plunge into a greater evil, the imperialistic adventure of the Spanish American War. "The American Republic was the hope of democracy. . . . It promised to do something more than the Old World toward correcting the injustice of nature, equalising the human lot, and making the community a community indeed. . . . Shall the American Republic follow its own destiny and do what it can to fulfil the special hopes which humanity has founded in it, or shall it slide into an imitation of European Imperialism?" At the same time Britain became entangled in the Boer War; and, to his infinite disgust, Laurier allowed Canada to be entangled also. The two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, to whose ultimate reunion he had dedicated his life,

seemed to be uniting only in a career of unscrupulous imperialism.

And when the Boer and the Spanish-American wars were over, there began to loom up the prospect of a still more terrible war between Britain and Germany. The last contributions of the Bystander to the *Weekly Sun* were mainly taken up with warning Canada not to let herself again be involved in the adventures of British Imperialism. "What a close to the Peelonian era!" he wrote to an old English friend in 1900, "I well remember the Reform Bill of 1832 with its golden hopes of a reign of reason and peace." The sun of humanity was behind a cloud, and perhaps the Bystander was not altogether sorry to leave the world before his worst fears as to the future could be realized.

The problem of our Canadian nationality, of the conditions which have determined its development in the past, of the possibilities which lie before it in the future, is the fundamental question that confronts any student of Canadian affairs. It is because Goldwin Smith's mind was exercised about this problem for so long a time and because he brought to it such a store of experience and philosophy from an older civilization that he is so much worth studying. Why has the growth of nationality been so slow and uncertain? In the first number of the *Canadian Monthly* of 1872 there is a long editorial discussing why British America had up to then produced no literature worth speaking of and pointing out that it was still a pioneer community from which the finer fruits of civilization could not yet be expected. We are still making the same defence of ourselves in 1933. For our political history shows the same perplexing lack of growth as our cultural history. The gristle of our frame has never matured and hardened into bone. As Sir John

Willison remarked cynically at the close of his life, with every change of government in Canada we are made into a nation over again. And the student of Canadian history, as he puzzles over these conditions, gets an overpowering feeling that he is going round and round inside a squirrel cage. He begins to wonder whether Goldwin Smith's interpretation of events was quite so wide of the mark after all. I expect that when the definitive history of the Dominion is at last written it will contain long and frequent quotations from the Bystander.

TRIBUTE TO SPARROWS

Lloyd Roberts

I

BITTER cold and snow-gray
The world beyond my window lay,
It seemed all life had crept away
In desperation;
When suddenly a bare branch stirred,
Across the pane a brown bunch whirred,
A voice in shrill defiance chirred
Vituperation.

Puffed wing and ruffed feather,
Scoffing, scolding all together,
What cared they how cold the weather
Or what betiding!
Here were troubles needing airing:
Raiding, nesting, laying, pairing,
Perhaps a lover's loud despairing
Or cruel deriding.

And I who'd heard it all before,
For twice ten thousand years or more,
At Babylon and Agincourt,
With heedless ears,
Now understood and felt the glamor
Of drama welded in the clamor
Of small tongues tripping like a hammer
Throughout the years.

TRIBUTE TO SPARROWS

II

You boastful brown belligerent little brat,
Despised by man but prized by every cat,
How oft you've wiped your bill on Pharaoh's hat,
And left a trace of whiting on the face
Of every god and devil where you've sat;
How many times have mated
While Demosthenes orated,
While Socrates debated,
While Cleopatra fêted,
While the twelve apostles waited
For Christ to break the bread in Simon's place!

How often, being sparrow, you've made sport
In Solomon's or Alexander's court,
Insolently careless of the sort
Of donkeys, kings and other braying things
That toiled and moiled around you in an ort,
So long as from with-under
All this bickering and blunder,
This inconsequential thunder,
Came the plenitude of plunder,
And of course you never wonder
At the scattering of largess nature flings.

At Cannae, Crécy, Austerlitz, Cambrai,
Before the broken bastions where we lay,
You wrangled fiercely in an iron spray
Over a crust of bread among the dead,
In your own sweet inimitable way;
Being just the same to you
Whether Cross or Crescent slew,
Whether ball or arrow flew,

For the immemorial stew
Rising still between you two
Was who should fill his belly with the bread.

III

The universe is yours
By dispossession,
And long as it endures
Must make concession
To such small prying plagues
Ubiquitous;
And while we shy a stone,
Ignore, denounce, condone,
You'll perch on every throne,
A yap on yellow legs,
Iniquitous.

And though not beautiful
As man counts beauty,
Nor over dutiful
As we count duty,
Your vices large of size,
Your virtues few,
Forever down the ages,
Kings, soldiers, serfs and sages,
Priests, poets, peasants, pages,
Will lift their tired eyes
At squawk of you.

IV

What matter if the pageantry of time
Gives no great place to sparrows' peccadillos!

Heroes can not be made by minstrel's rhyme,
Nor armorplate make men of armadillos.

Despised you may be by the worldly great,
Ignored by poets seeking inspiration,
Lovers will call on nightingales or fate
To give to passion vocal explication;

Castles have doves to hover round their towers,
Chimneys have storks to bring fertility,
Gardens have peacocks strutting through the flowers
And snow-white swans to gild gentility;

And yet immortal Sappho softly sings
Of Aphrodite borne by lovely legions
Of fluttering sparrows clouding with their wings
The flowery meadows of terrestrial regions.

Buddha and Brahma earnestly implored
Patience for sparrows scratching in the stalls,
And Jesus himself bears witness that the Lord
Is quick to mark each sparrow as it falls.

V

O mountebank in garb of black and tan!
O gutter-snipe and mendicant of dung!
O vagabond of dump and garbage-can!
There never was born a bird of braver tongue.

This you may boast amidst your teapot violence,
Viewing the world and everything that's in it,
Never were you reduced to sulky silence
Nor quelled your quarrels for one single minute.

In the beginning you watched the Lord creating,
And cocked your tail with all a sparrow's scorn;
No doubt the end will find you still berating,
Drowning the fiery blasts of Gabriel's horn.

THE LATIN SPIRIT IN LITERATURE

CHARLES N. COCHRANE

FACED with the problem of depicting the spirit of Rome, the question may well be asked, to begin with: who were the Roman people? The mists that obscure the dawn of Roman history rise to disclose the city of the Seven Hills. But is there any connection, apart from the name which they held in common, between the spear-bearing populace of the Servian city and the citizens of an empire which, nine centuries later, "comprehended the fairest part of the earth and the most civilized portion of mankind"? And who, moreover, of all the names that appear in Roman history, are to be taken as most typically Roman? Are they the Valerii, the Camilli, the Decii, those colourless heroes of the primitive commonwealth, rather than, for example, the Catos, the Scipios and the Gracchi of the second century B.C., or, again, the Caesars and Pompeys of the last days of the republic? What connection, in turn, may be discerned between the senatorial aristocracy whose very names were extinguished in the agony of the republic, and that of imperial times when the provinces of Spain, Gaul and Africa gave not merely senators but emperors to Rome; or between these latter and men like Diocletian, Constantine and Theodosius? The long gallery of Roman statesmen contains figures of the most diverse origin and character. The same is true of the writers whose labours created Latin literature and indirectly, through it, the various literatures of modern Europe—Sallust, Cicero and Caesar, Lucretius and Vergil, Livy and Tacitus, Tertullian, Lactantius, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine and Boethius—to name no more.

The list is far from exhaustive; but it will serve to recall a fact which no student can afford to neglect, viz., that provincials as well as Italians, and Christians no less than pagans, made their contribution to Latin letters. There are, indeed, good grounds for asserting that even Cicero and Vergil should not be regarded as final exponents and interpreters of the Roman spirit, their true rôle being rather that of pioneers, in precisely the same sense in which the Eternal City was but the prototype and model of the City of God. For it was the function, especially, of Latin Christianity to point out how and why the Empire of Rome fell short of that ideal of permanence and universality to which she aspired, while endeavouring, at the same time, to do justice to her solid and substantial achievements as the mother of civilization in the west. And it is unjust to stop short of these last models of Latinity in any attempt to estimate the significance of Latin letters, whether from the standpoint of sincerity, originality and power, or from that of their influence upon the thought and imagination of posterity.

Not that at any time, perhaps, did Roman literature afford the fullest and most adequate expression of the national genius. For nearly seven centuries, indeed, the Latin muse was dumb and, except for rustic farces, annalistic chronicles, and certain adaptations of Greek comedy made by Plautus and Terence, the Romans were practically illiterate. Even in the days of Sallust, a man felt that some apology was needed for putting pen to paper. Sallust's explanation of the backward state of Latin letters, that all the most intelligent people were engaged in business[1] reveals the fact that literature was hardly less foreign to the contemporary society of

[1]Cat. 8, 5 *prudentissimus quisque maxime negotiosus.*

statesmen, landlords and financiers than it had been to the nation of intelligent peasants which constituted the early commonwealth. Nevertheless, if Mommsen is to be trusted, it was in the century which preceded the outbreak of the First Punic War that the moral and political vitality of the Roman people reached its *apogée;* and, at least throughout republican and early imperial times, no one would deny them either boldness and originality in the conception, or resolution and endurance in the execution of their designs.

If these qualities are somewhat imperfectly reflected in Latin literature, the reasons are partly inherent in the Roman temperament, partly the result of historical accident. The artistic spirit in Rome had to contend against peculiar handicaps—the stubborn fundamentalism of a Cato, expressing itself in a mingled contempt for and fear of ideas—the national quality of *gravitas* (a congenital disinclintion to let oneself go) well illustrated by the remark of Cicero: nobody dances except fools and drunken men. Coupled with these was a rooted distrust of mere aestheticism, which the Romans persistently refused to recognize as an adequate substitute for character. It was not so much because he was considered a bad emperor as because he considered himself a good fiddler that Nero was stripped of the purple. That the Romans should have confused such aestheticism with the true spirit of creative art is not surprising; it is still less surprising that Roman puritanism should have revolted against it as the most serious possible menace to the national morale. For it must be remembered that Hellenism was stale and weary when it invaded Rome; and the Alexandrians, despite their original and vital work in science, were on the literary side organized to preserve a culture exhibiting

all the marks of decadence and already moribund. It was, therefore, a tainted source from which the Romans had to draw their inspiration, while their own powers of discrimination were as yet immature.

Nevertheless, with the reception of Greek letters in certain aristocratic circles of the second century B.C., the Romans proceeded to lay the foundation of the first great bilingual culture of Europe, and old Cato himself could not long refuse to breathe the intoxicating atmosphere. Literature was cultivated at first with a somewhat indiscriminate enthusiasm and a certain degree of affectation; the earliest Roman efforts at composition were characteristically enough in Greek, and even Cicero wrote a Greek history of his consulship of which he was inordinately proud. Yet the revolutionary character of the movement began to be manifest when Latin presently took its place beside the tongue of Homer as a literary medium; and the precise nature of the impact of Greece on Rome is nowhere better illustrated than by its effect on the language itself.

When the movement began, Latin was but the dialect of a race of intelligent peasants, revealing little more than a capacity for homely wit and wisdom, strongly reminiscent of the Spanish or Italian proverb; and the language which, in its maturity, constituted an admirable vehicle for terse and pithy expression, remained at all times somewhat bald and metallic, incapable of conveying the finer and more delicate shades of meaning possessed, for example, by the Greek. Its poverty, however, was enriched by the inventive genius of men like Lucretius and Cicero, whose services in perfecting the instrument of expression were not the least important part of their work as men of letters. Through these men, Latin was not merely provided with an adequate vocabu-

lary, much of which English speech has in its turn appropriated; but they also initiated the study of rhetoric, which was one of the best and worst of the legacies of Greece to Rome. The structural possibilities of the language were fully explored, and resulted on the one hand in the evolution of the Ciceronian or Livian period, on the other in the development of that aphoristic form of expression, in which for many, the real genius of Latin may be thought to reside. What other language has the capacity for expressing such a wealth of meaning in two or three words?

"caveat emptor."
"princeps legibus solutus."
"summum ius, summa iniuria."

But whichever style was adopted by Latin writers, it may be affirmed that their work was invariably the product of the most meticulous attention, and *curiosa felicitas* was by no means a monopoly of Horace. It may be added that while, no doubt, careless spontaneity has its charms, study of the art of expression becomes a vice only when men are so preoccupied with how they are to say it that they do not pause to consider what they have to say. But since when has it become a crime to entertain as well as to instruct?

This is to make no apology for the cult of rhetoric at its worst. The magic of the spoken or written word seems to have fascinated the society of the empire, as it had that of the old Greek cities, and the growth of the spirit of pure *belles lettres* became more pronounced as the end approached. Painting and sculpture the imperial aristocrats left to slaves and subjects, satisfied themselves to possess and enjoy after the fashion of American millionaires; but the cult of rhetoric they cherished from the days of the free commonwealth,

though its life survived all possible meaning. The spectacle of a Sidonius, blandly composing Vergilian hexameters on his Gallic estate, or addressing letters in the vein of Cicero and Pliny, ostensibly to his friends, in reality to a more than dubious posterity, at a moment when civilization itself was crashing about his head, affords few parallels for frivolity in any age.

The somewhat undue emphasis on rhetoric in Latin literature was no doubt occasioned largely by the fact that the Romans felt themselves always as custodians rather than creators, their function being to appropriate and diffuse the elements of a culture, the unique excellence of which they were sensible enough to recognize; and if this feeling tended to promote an inferiority complex from which they were never quite able to shake themselves free (*excudent alii*), it at least implied the virtue of modesty, a quality not altogether to be despised. At the same time, without in the least pretending to be original, they succeeded in infusing a typically Roman spirit into all their work—their initial inhibitions themselves, perhaps, coming to their assistance in this respect. Their outlook remained at all times somewhat narrow and their attitude rigid, never wholly that of the artist or the seer. But their work was characterized by an element of high seriousness, inspired no doubt by the strong sense of social purpose with which they addressed themselves to their task, and thus they achieved effects which, at their best, are almost if not quite Miltonic.

These qualities may be illustrated by almost every phase of their literary work. They are obvious in the satire, which the Romans claimed as the only branch of literature distinctively their own, from the Horatian criticism of human life and human foibles, none the less

severe because it is gentle, to the blazing wrath of a Juvenal, denouncing with prophetic fervour the follies and iniquities of mankind. Historiography, emerging under the inspiration of Greek models from the stage of mere annals, developed in Roman hands along distinctively Roman lines. The speculative and scientific spirit of an Herodotus or a Thucydides is almost entirely missing; so also is the spirit of all-embracing *curiositas* which produced those compilations of world-history so characteristic of the Hellenistic cosmopolis. Roman historians are one and all intensely propagandist. In their hands history is made to serve a moral and political purpose, and that this should be done the more effectively, all the tricks of rhetoric are summoned into play. Thus, in the guise of a Thucydidean analysis of the revolutionary spirit, Sallust comes to the rescue of a discredited Roman radicalism, while Caesar employs the aid of history in presenting his case in the controversies excited by the Gallic and Civil Wars. Of a piece with these are Livy's paean of triumphant republicanism and the moral superiority of the republican spirit, which were to wake an echo more than a thousand years later in the heart of Machiavelli; together with Tacitus' hardly veiled attack on the despotism of the Caesars, the effectiveness of which may be gauged by the fact that, until the memory of Julius was vindicated by Mommsen in our own day, public opinion was almost unanimous in condemning him as a second Catiline—only worse than Catiline because he succeeded while the latter failed.

It is important to notice that Roman satire and Roman history are both concerned with persons; and that what they afford is really an analysis and criticism of the psychology of rugged individualism—the spirit of individual and collective self-assertion on which depended

at once the strength and weakness of Rome. The Romans, if they do not represent the origin, at least typify the essence of the acquisitive and conservative spirit in modern civilization. It was Marcus Aurelius who described his fellow-countrymen as hard-boiled; and they were in truth a tough-fibred, materially-minded people if there ever was one, almost devoid of the sensibility of races to whom even physical pain must have been a torment inconceivable to this race of coarser grain. Thus, while to the Greeks life was an art, for the Romans it was a business. While therefore, the rich Hellenic genius exhausted itself in the effort of speculation, and in the cultivation of various forms of artistic expression, the Romans, with infinitely fewer spiritual resources, devoted themselves to the acquisition and conservation of material power, and this aim they pursued with narrow concentration and undeviating consistency for as long as they deserved their name. The Greeks shrank in terror from excess; the Romans found nothing excessive which was possible, and their measure of the possible was based on a "will to live", cherished by them to a degree almost unique among the peoples of antiquity.

The roots of the Roman system go deep into human nature and experience. Its ultimate basis lay, no doubt, in the family right characteristic of the pre-political form of association in Italy. This right, destined though it was to slow attrition in the civic order, nevertheless resisted the process to such a degree that the *patria potestas* could still be described by Gaius (two centuries after Christ) as "our peculiar institution". *Patria potestas*, indeed, lasted in principle throughout the whole classical period, and it was only under the Lower Empire, when its religious basis was undermined,

its moral and social value impugned, that it finally disappeared.

This family right, centering about the conception of property, reflects the mentality of the peasant proprietor who thereby asserts his unequivocal claim to use and consume (*uti abutique*) his own. The Roman was thus the original "man of property"; and the notion of *dominium*, carried over from the pre-political to the political stage of development, was made the cornerstone in the Roman fabric of the state. It was not John Locke but Cicero who (in a little noticed passage) first asserted that the state exists to protect property.[1]

This notion survived in full vigour until late in Imperial times, and its general acceptance served as an effective check upon tendencies toward administrative autocracy throughout the period of the principate. It was, indeed, destined to perish only under the dominate, when political absolutism combined with Christian social philosophy to effect its overthrow.

Moreover, the scope of the idea was much more comprehensive than the mere tenure of land and goods. *Potestas*, *manus*, *dominatio* are aspects of a right which expressed itself in the family discipline, an "order" of the most far-reaching character, religious, moral, and penal. In Roman law, the moral subjection of wife and child was tantamount to actual slavery. The position of the slave himself was developed with a vigorous logic which knew no mercy. And, in the laws of *nexum* and *addictio*, by which the claims of the creditor were asserted against those of the debtor, the conception of right can go no further. The myth of Shylock pro-

[1] *De Officiis* II, 73. In primis videndum erit ei qui rempublicam administrabit ut *suum quisque teneat* neque de bonis privatorum publice diminutio fiat. . . . *Hanc enim ob causam maxime ut sua tenerent res publicae civitates constitutae sunt.* Nam, etsi duce natura congregabantur homines, tamen spe custodiae rerum suarum urbium praesidia quaerebant.

bably had an actual counterpart in the primitive republican law which equated not merely liberty, but life itself, with solvency; and for centuries the law continued to bear heavily upon liberty, even after it had reached the point of sparing life. Against the solid rock of *dominium*, the waves of radical agitation pounded in vain. The first effective bankruptcy act in Rome dates from Julius Caesar, and even it registers the fact that the greatest of demagogues and revolutionaries was forced to make his peace with property as the price of power. Throughout the whole period of classical jurisprudence, *suum cuique reddere* and *caveat emptor* remained the stern maxims of the law.

Patria potestas non in atrocitate visa, declares the humane jurist of the third century. It is vain to attempt to throw a veil of sentiment over this conception, which made it possible for a father, as late as the time of Cicero, to condemn and execute his son, just as it had made a hero out of Brutus for slaying his offspring in the first days of the republic. Nevertheless, the family discipline, harsh and brutal as it was, was perhaps the source of that ingrained passion for social order which pervaded all departments of Roman life, and continued to manifest vitality through all the changes which came about in the long evolution of Roman society. It was, no doubt, the seed-bed of many of those qualities which have been recognized as peculiarly or distinctively Roman—the sense of *pietas*, *gravitas*, *dignitas*, as well as the intense conservatism of the *mos maiorum*. But its chief significance was that it gave material content to that conception of empirical personality which was to find expression in the law. It was what the Romans meant when they spoke of liberty.

Accordingly, they stand for all time as the type of a

practical people whose objectives are realizable because they are clear, and clear because they are limited to what the eye may see and the hand may grasp. It is no accident that the spear was for them the symbol of ownership, or that the process of conveying property (land, slaves, horses, cattle) continued for centuries to be marked by the ritual of the copper and scales. They struggled for rights rather than right, they recognized duties rather than duty; both rights and duties they defined with a formal precision for which the lucid and exact phraseology of Roman law constituted the perfect instrument. Classical jurisprudence reveals the most meticulous definition of the rights of the juristic person in relation to other persons and things, as well as of obligations, whether arising from contract or delict, and the precise modes by which such obligations might be extinguished. The history of Rome reflects the same essential legal-mindedness, not merely in the picture which it reveals of the evolution of Roman public life, but also in the way by which the Roman people faced and solved the problems of their imperial and foreign relations. It was this spirit which largely exhausted, if it did not entirely obliterate, any sense of fairness or chivalry in their dealings with friend and enemy, thus giving colour to the oft-repeated charge of Roman bad faith; as when, for example, in repudiating an agreement made by a general in the field, the Roman people handed to the embarrassed enemy the unfortunate diplomat, bound and naked, as if that were adequate compensation. Concrete rights, clear and definite obligations, such were the elements which constituted that status of which the Romans were so proud, and which they cherished rather than abstract conceptions of liberty, equality and fraternity, or any of the various forms of democratic control.

Amor sui, in the sense of individual self-assertion, was however but one aspect of the Roman spirit. Throughout the whole course of Roman history, it was counterbalanced and held in leash by the assertion of a collective egoism no less intense and no less characteristic. And, as the one found expression in *dominium*, so the other manifested itself in *imperium*, public authority and the discipline of the city. These two conceptions were, of course, never wholly in accord. The Romans were, indeed, to discover that no final reconciliation between them was possible; though this was the task to which they addressed themselves from the beginning and it constitutes the main theme of Roman history, the main preoccupation of Roman historians. "Nerva was the first to reconcile the two formerly contradictory principles of liberty and authority." Thus Tacitus, when the ship of state appeared once more to have reached calm waters and sunny skies, after the storm and stress of revolution and tyranny lasting over a period of two hundred years, his enthusiasm for the Antonine peace with its slogans of prosperity and humanity tempered perhaps by doubts and fears born of his reading of human nature and human history. For this was not the first time at which it appeared that the Romans had solved the baffling question of social peace, only to discover that the foundations were no less insecure than those which had crumbled in former convulsions, mocking the efforts of earlier architects and confuting the testimony of those who endorsed their plans. Disillusionment and cynicism were, therefore, the lot of those, like him who lived at a time when the classical world was sinking into the lethargy of old age; and they were inclined to question the value of the over-ripe fruits of a culture which had been purchased at the cost of so much

bloodshed and so many tears. *Solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant.* With this stinging comment, Tacitus brands Roman imperialism as though the expansion of the empire had been marked by nothing but heaps of skulls; while elsewhere he flings down the challenge of barbarous innocence to cultured decadence and, in unmistakeable accents, voices the theory that civilization is a disease. For him, as for Juvenal, the miasma had invaded and poisoned every department of life, but its manifestations were nowhere more clearly evidenced than by the corruption of public affairs of which Caesarism was at once the cause and the leading symptom. Hence, with mingled sarcasm and invective, he depicts the spectacle of a Tiberius, a Nero, or a Domitian, cowering in the palace whose very existence constituted a flagrant insult to the monuments of the free republic over which it towered; and from thence, with the sinister backing of slaves and mercenaries, exercising a domination over the former Lords of the World intolerable even to cringing Orientals; while, through the *Lex Maiestatis*, they mocked the majesty of the people by turning the very bulwark of their freedom into the instrument by which they were remorselessly destroyed.

Corruptio optimi pessima. The scathing criticisms of a Tacitus are directed against the perversion of an idea to which, in keeping with the best Roman traditions, he gave his ultimate if not unqualified adherence. They are, in fact, an inverted defence of republicanism. For while it may be true that "the state has no finality and can have no perfected form", this fact did not deter the Romans from their efforts to construct an enduring political fabric. Committed from the dawn of their history to a solution of the problem of material justice, the Romans, like the Greeks, found it in the idea of the

commonwealth, and to this idea they made a distinctive contribution which is not less impressive or less instructive than that of any other people. It is impossible to understand the Romans without some appreciation of their conception of the state.

This state, with its peculiar social and political discipline, was the outgrowth of settlements by kindred stocks on neighbouring spurs of the Seven Hills. The labours of Roman historians, ancient and modern, have made familiar the process by which, through the constant pressure of foreign wars, and a memorable series of incorporations, the city of Romulus and Numa grew till it came in almost literal fact to comprehend the world. Our concern, however, is not with the history of the city, but with the nature of the civic bond as it was apprehended by the Romans.

To the Romans, the state was sacred but not divine. For them, as for the Greek cosmologist, the world was full of gods; but these gods were never revealed in a manner palpable to the senses and within the range of human sympathy, subsisting merely as mysterious and awful natural forces with location but no shape, and quite devoid of the human impulses and passions, the vices and the virtues which, although in transcendent form, characterized the denizens of Olympus. Accordingly there are no Roman legends of supermen or nobles sprung from the gods. Mythologies and theogonies, statues and idols, represent merely the accretions which gathered about the religion of Numa, as the imperial destiny of Rome brought her in contact with Greeks and Orientals. But this religion itself remained in essence a singularly pure if somewhat unusual form of naturalism, from the standpoint of which all supernaturalism was either superstition or atheism.

While, therefore, the Romans described themselves as the most religious of mortals, what they meant by religion was nothing more than the sanctification of the material means of life; and this they effected by means of rites and ceremonies purely formal and external, as was appropriate to a people who employed them merely to secure material claims upon a material providence. Accordingly, the religious impulse exhibited itself in a scrupulous attention to those observances by which malignant forces were averted and those which were friendly propitiated; and the impulse was satisfied by the correct interpretation of the divine will as revealed in extraordinary natural phenomena, and by the series of offerings, supplications, prayers and purifications which marked the religious year. Roman religion was, therefore, merely the expression of an attitude which was determined to be at home in this mysterious world, and to discover pragmatically the means of doing so. The establishment of the *pax deorum* was thus but the first step in the establishment of the *pax Romana*, and Symmachus was true to the spirit of his ancestors when, in the last expiring hour of Roman paganism, he defined religion as "the soul of a people".

How much of this spirit may be detected in Latin literature, the student of Vergil and Ovid may judge. Paradoxically enough, it is strongly reflected even in Lucretius, who preaches the Greek gospel of liberation through enlightenment with conscientiousness possible only to a Roman, inspired with a fervour and earnestness engendered not by Greek atheism, but by the Latin sense of a power working in nature, the mysterious force of *natura naturans*. It is this force which sanctifies the labours of men's hands; by it and through it Aeneas, the minister of fate, was sustained in all the trials,

dangers and temptations which attended his painful migration to Italy

> dum conderet urbem
> Inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum
> Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.

Thus Vergil to a generation which, in its mad and suicidal competition for place and power, had forgotten that Nature exacts a price from those who frustrate her purposes, and that the price she exacts is national extinction.

The intention of Vergil is clearly to remind his countrymen of the solid foundations upon which the Eternal City had been laid and upon which they must continue to build if Rome was to realize the full significance of her imperial destiny. The argument is developed with artistic power in keeping with the grandeur of the motive; an artistry so rich and splendid, indeed, as almost to obscure attention to the theme. His work is thus in a large sense, like that of Lucretius, didactic, and the real subject in both cases is not god or nature but man. Otherwise, the difference between them is as wide as the difference between Greece and Rome. The one preaches a gospel of salvation through knowledge; the other that of salvation through will. The one holds up an ideal of repose and refined sensual enjoyment; the other, one of restless effort and activity. Lucretius urges the recognition that men are limited as the dust; that the pursuit of their aspirations is as vain and futile as are the impulses of religion, pride, ambition which ceaselessly urge them on. The purpose of Vergil is to vindicate those obscure forces within the self by which mankind is impelled to material achievement and inhibited from destroying the work of his own hands. Thus,

while he may address his friend in the fine compliment

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas

it is clear that, in his heart, he condemns the shallow Hellenic intellectualism no less than the conclusions to which it leads, and summons Romans to renewed faith in the secular meaning of what their ancestors had accomplished in the past, and what they themselves might hope to accomplish in the future. It is this difference which makes the distinction between the melancholy resignation of Lucretius and the resigned melancholy of Vergil; the one characteristic of a man who accepts the intellectual assurance of futility, the other the mark of one who, like all enlightened men, is beset by the problem of finding a reasonable ground for his faith. It is this difference that makes the distinction between the epic of civilized materialism and that of material civilization.

For, as Vergil sees it, civilization does not evolve of itself; it is not the ultimate but unforseen result of a fortuitous collocation of atoms. It must be constructed, and Vergil envisages his countrymen above all else as builders. Properly to understand Aeneas, it is necessary to think of him in the rôle of immigrant and pioneer. Man against a background of nature which he seeks to subdue to his purpose; concentration of all the powers of heart, head, and hand in the steady pursuit of an end kept in view to the exclusion of all else; the will to work, the will to fight; boldness of innovation combined with intense desire to conserve accumulated gains; that passionate affection for what one has made by blood and sweat, tears and misery, which men call patriotism, a sentiment even for us akin to religion, for the Romans

religion itself—these are the elements of the picture which Vergil unfolds in measured stanzas which themselves deserve the immortality due to their theme.

If, however, the Aeneid has in addition the character of a national epic, this is because Vergil perceives that to build a civilization requires something more than effort, and that is organization. The magnificent demonstration of disciplined obedience which characterized the Roman state in all the greatest periods of her history is also reflected in her greatest literary monument—leadership at once "pious" and prudent (this, by the way, is the answer to the Christian charge that Aeneas had not the courage of a dog); subordination based on that iron law of inequality which seems to mark all the relationships of the natural man; co-operation, arising from the sense of a common purpose, shared by leader and led, in the task of constructing an impregnable fortress for the *palladium*, the guarantee and pledge of the national fate—a political religion, a political morality, Machiavellism two thousand years before Machiavelli; technocracy, the cold and objective measurement of forces which, whether material or psychological, must be controlled in the interests of national and imperial utility, for the realization of an empirical freedom of action which is never achieved except at the expense of others; the essence of this "objectivity", which lies in undivided attention[2] to the problem at issue, to the exclusion of hatred or love, anger or sentiment, the passions which blind[3] men to their true interest.

Thus does Vergil seek to justify that urge to practical activity, the spirit of which we shall best understand if we think of the Romans as having achieved in the Old

[2]Sall. Cat., 57, § 2, *ubi intenderis ingenium, ibi valet.*
[3]*id.*, *officiunt.*

World precisely that to which men of our own race have set their hands in the New. The state and empire of Rome depend fundamentally on *will:* virtue is not knowledge, it is character; and its fruits are seen in activity, rather than in repose or contemplation. Aeneas is thus the pilgrim father of antiquity; his followers the Mayflower company of the Ancient World; while the organized society of the empire is the ancient version of the New England Kingdom of the Saints; subject, it may be added, to the same limitations and threatened by the same dangers as confront all societies in which *amor sui* disguises itself as the love of God.

Accordingly, Vergil gives authentic expression not merely to the Latin temperament, but in considerable degree to that of western civilization as a whole. In so doing, he touches a high-water mark of achievement in Latin letters, never to be surpassed except by Augustine. In him alone, you see them all. For he makes us understand the real basis of that principle of concord or agreement which underlies the Roman philosophy of the state—no shallow intellectual assent or social compact but, as the Latin word itself implies, "a union of hearts"—as is clear from the realistic definitions of the *civitas* or *respublica* which are found everywhere in Latin literature.[4]

Those who called themselves Romans, no matter what their race or origin, well knew on what they could agree. They set out to make the world safe for property. On this principle depend two of the most characteristic phenomena of Roman history: (1) expansion, by which the provinces, the *praedia populi Romani*, as even Cicero

[4]Cic., *de Rep.*, I, 39, multitudo hominum in quoddam vinculum redacta concordiae.

Aug., *de Civ.* Dei, XIX, 24, coetus multitudinis rationalis rerum quas diligit concordi communione sociatus.

unblushingly calls them, were extended from the British wall to the Euphrates, and from the Rhine-Danube frontier to the Sahara desert: (2) incorporation: the assimilation of fresh factors of strength wherever they were to be found, on the theory elucidated by Claudius: *quod usquam egregium, huc transferre.* It is this principle which accounts for the element of "universality" which the commentators find in Rome. But it will always be a limited and bogus universality for those who refuse to admit that, in property, the human personality finds adequate and complete expression.

That Vergil did not occupy the solitary eminence in Latin literature to which he was entitled is a curious fact, demanding explanation, even if to explain it is to throw a somewhat lurid beam of light upon the Roman spirit. It is the fate of naturalism to devour its own gods, and to this fate the Romans were peculiarly exposed because of their singularly narrow and pragmatic temper. The effort of Vergil to rehabilitate the national ethos was, therefore, nothing but a splendid failure; and the noblest prophet of the religion of civilization shared the fate of Horace who was merely its exponent. Vergil became a text for schoolboys. The pedants set themselves to rend the massive fabric of his verse to illustrate their subtle points of grammar and style, while they isolated his most stirring episodes to make them themes for infantile debate—in this way following the practice of barbarians who have always and everywhere despoiled the noblest monuments of antiquity. Paradoxically enough, almost the only people to take Vergil seriously were the Christians, who approached him with fascination as they recoiled from him in terror, for the very simple reason that they regarded him as a man who had something to say. Thus, in the estimation of posterity,

Vergil came merely to occupy a place alongside Cicero, whose name bulked equally large with his in the republic of Latin letters.

This fact might seem to indicate the necessity of saying something about Cicero and the Ciceronian humanism which makes such an appeal, for example, to Professor Babbitt,—that doctrine which represents all that is left to the emancipated Puritan who has shed everything but his prejudices and wonders what to do with them; and who therefore battles with a sword of bronze against the powerful forces of a materialism with which his practical sense urges him to compromise at the most vital points. But this would serve merely to emphasize the sufficiently obvious truth that, while naturalism devours its own gods, it never succeeds in replacing them with others more impregnable to the assaults of time and circumstance. In other words, it would serve merely to illustrate the spiritual bewilderment which infected all enlightened Romans—a bewilderment which was, perhaps, the most characteristic blight on the Imperial Community of Culture.

From this bewilderment the Romans succeeded in shaking themselves free only with the second birth of Latin letters which came about under the powerful stimulus and inspiration of Christianity; and once again they were to show themselves the faithful custodians and interpreters of a tradition which they did not create. It would be absurd, of course, to attempt in a few words any real characterization of Latin Christianity; and we are here concerned merely to exhibit, if possible, the fundamental unity which underlay the Latin spirit, despite the vast chasm which divided *Romanitas* from the Christians who seceded from the system.

The Romans began as builders; as builders they

ended. It has been shown that the native Roman genius was rooted in the soil; the iron masterfulness which made the Romans Lords of the World depended upon the character they possessed as pioneers. But, with the conquest of Greece, the Romans were for a time swept off their feet by the spirit of Hellas, and they imbibed the doctrines of disintegration from a people who, try as they might to diagnose the mortal malady from which they suffered, were unable to effect a cure, largely because of the intellectualist formulae which they employed. This tidal wave of Hellenic influence reached the high water mark in Rome just about the time of the fall of the Republic; to which catastrophe it contributed by disrupting the traditionalist moral principles, based on the obsolete primitivism of the early commonwealth, upon which the society of a vast and cosmopolitan world empire still sought to live; but which were clearly too feeble to withstand the strain. Witness the spectacle of a Catullus or a Clodius or any other of the spineless aesthetes whom Cicero furiously denounces as spiritual affinities of the Catilinarian crowd. But presently the innate steadiness of the Roman character began to assert itself, as intelligent men suddenly perceived the chasm which yawned at their feet, if the empire should (as seemed almost inevitable) collapse. Many of them, though with fear and hesitation, threw their weight behind Caesarism, as the only possible hope. And out of the mouth of one of the worst of the devil's disciples (in a suggested programme of reconstruction addressed to the dictator) came, strangely enough, the first blast of the wind of true doctrine. Why, asks Sallust, go to the Greek for moral precepts, for a practical philosophy of life, to men who suppose, for example, that the road to heaven is paved with mathematics? If the history

and experience of Romans does not suggest to them the true basis of a working system, then God help them, for Aristotle cannot.

It was in this spirit, that Vergil, as we have sought to show, attempted to depict the true foundations of the city, as a warning no less than a guide to the public to whom it was addressed. But what Vergil succeeded in revealing to his contemporaries was merely a vision of the empirical personality, with its basis, as we have said, in will. Romans still found it necessary to go to the Greeks for an answer to the question: what is to be the intellectual content of life, now that we have built the city, and it is no longer necessary to extend the frontiers? That the end of life is contemplation was a doctrine which made no appeal to this people with its thoroughly practical temper; Stoicism, with its activist implications, thus proved to be the philosophy which bid most successfully for Roman allegiance, and made the widest appeal. But its obvious defects and limitations still left the field open to Christianity.

Of all the grounds on which Christianity might appeal to the Latins, undoubtedly the greatest was because of the light it threw on human personality, and the guidance it offered for the practical conduct of life. Thus, to the theory of personality which was slowly developing in Roman hands, the Latin fathers put the coping stone. As Sallust and Vergil had discovered the empirical, so Augustine discovered the transcendental will. This, in turn, he made the basis of that Communion of Saints which was the Christian alternative to Vergil's city of men. And, through the doctrines of sin, grace, and redemption, by which the human pilgrim was to attain at last the eternal peace of the Divine City, he achieved that philosophy of progress for which the classical world

had waited in vain for two thousand years; and which, even through its perversions, has been one of the chief sources of inspiration to the mind of modern man.

Thus, the function of Latin Christianity was to widen and deepen the spiritual foundations of a material life which it refused either to repudiate or deny; to assert a spiritual peace as the basis of material (or social) peace. In this way the Latin fathers supplied an antidote to the pessimism of Classical antiquity by stripping life of all vague idealism and sentimentalism and representing it as something to be remade by a radical remaking of character; thus summoning men from the classical ideals of repose or enjoyment to a life of effort through which their spiritual significance would be realized.

Latin Christianity culminated in Augustine, who may justly be described as, at once, the last of all the Romans and the first citizen of the world. For he gathered up the whole vision of antiquity (Hebrew, Greek and Latin) into a mighty synthesis which only a member of the world wide empire, living at the conclusion of her cycle of history, could have achieved, and at the same time, he delivered it to posterity in accents which, though perhaps fainter in our day than for previous generations, are still intelligible to the modern man. Not satisfied like the Hebrew to weep by the waters of Babylon, nor yet, like the Greek, merely to envisage the pattern of a city laid up in heaven, but true to the native genius of the children of Romulus, he traced the outlines of an ecclesiastical polity which, if its battlements soared above the clouds, nevertheless had its foundations solidly embedded in the living rock of empirical fact. Leaving it to others to pursue millennialist dreams of a New Jerusalem, he erected the last but not the least impressive or significant monument to the spirit of Ancient Rome.

MARIVAUX AND THE ART OF COMEDY

F. C. Green

IT is a commonplace of literary history that a dramatic genius, a Shakespeare, a Molière or a Goethe, exercises a fertilizing effect on posterity. Dramatic critics, moreover, urge our younger writers to model themselves on the great craftsmen of the past, forgetting that these, *qua* geniuses, are supposed to have attained, in their peculiar spheres, the highest point of artistic perfection. One can well imagine, however, a much-badgered young modern retorting, and with some justice, "My dear sir, it is precisely because I realize that Shakespeare, Molière and Goethe are, as you say, geniuses that I refuse to waste my time and energies in a futile attempt to beat them at their own game. Does not genius imply perfection, finality—in short, the closing of a chapter in the evolution of art?" But surely this presumptuous young upstart will not deny at least, that the study of Shakespeare, Molière and Goethe must be of immense value to one who is learning the elementary technique of his craft? "Dangerous models", he replies. "Imagine me, like Shakespeare, basing a play on the hypothesis that a man has mortgaged one pound of his flesh to a vindictive usurer, or, like Goethe, on the assumption that, as Stendhal says, a man needs the help of the devil to seduce a little village girl! Or would you have me, like Molière in the *Avare*, bring about my dénouement by a complicated and romantic business involving corsairs and slaves?"

Here we have a sad and, I fear, common case—the obstinate refusal to be fertilized. Are we to conclude, then, that perhaps after all genius does not exercise a

fertilizing effect on its artistic posterity? Let us turn to history for enlightenment. In Racine and Molière we have admittedly examples of two geniuses. Racine attained perfection in pure tragedy; Molière in the branch of comedy we call *la comédie de caractère* or more obscurely "type" comedy. The former begat a numerous progeny of imitators of whom the most notable are Crébillon the elder and Voltaire, who between them must have written some seventy tragedies. Yet of all these only one, Voltaire's *Zaire*, has survived and that rather as a museum piece than as a living work of genius. Similarly, Molière gave rise to a long line of disciples all industriously wasting their energies working on an exhausted lode. The effect, then, of the genius of Racine and Molière was apparently not to fertilize, but to paralyze French tragedy and comedy for well-nigh a century; to produce, not a galaxy of geniuses but a series of second-rate imitators. And what is worse, when we examine the work of some of these men, it is almost morally certain that had they followed, not Molière or Racine but their own inspiration, they would have achieved fame. Destouches, for instance, was well on the way to evolving a new type of play, sentimental comedy. Crébillon and Voltaire, less obsessed by Racine, might have given France romantic tragedies.

Is the effect of genius, then, to sterilize posterity? No. But the fertilizing process is not direct and simple. Genius does exercise a stimulative, energizing influence but in an indirect and almost negative fashion, proceeding, as it were, by elimination. In the work of every genius there is an inexorable ring of finality, inaudible to the vast majority of his contemporaries and immediate successors. Yet one or two sensitive minds perceive it. Instinctively recognizing that perfection has been attained in one field of their art, they turn to another and direct all their

energies towards original creation. Such was precisely the attitude of Marivaux in regard to the genius of Molière. "I would rather," said he, "occupy a humble back seat in the little group of original authors than a proud position in the front rank of the throng of literary apes". Except for Beaumarchais, Marivaux is the only French comic author of the eighteenth century who recognized the finality of Molière's genius and the only author, therefore, in the realm of pure comedy who himself deserves the title of original genius.

Marivaux began to write for the stage in 1720, some fifty years after the death of Molière. Most of his plays, it is worth noting, were written not for the *Comédie Française*, but for the *Théâtre Italien*, whose players, having been exiled some years previously by Louis XIV, had now been brought back by the Regent. It was not, of course, new to find a Frenchman writing for the Italians. Regnard and Dufresny had done so but only to the extent of isolated scenes. These were interspersed through the Italian farces which consisted largely of pantomime. Marivaux was the first French author of note to supply them with entire comedies. The Italian manner of acting, more subtle, less rigid than that of the House of Molière and relying for most of its effect on expressive gesture, was admirably suited to interpret the delicate *nuances* of sentiment and emotion, the vivacious wit, the fluid action of Marivaux's comedies.

Molière had exposed the gamut of the great human vices and foibles to the deadly play of his satire and common-sense, incarnating them in immortal, universal types. So now in every civilized country the names Harpagon, Tartuffe, Alceste, Arnolphe and George Dandin evoke the same ideas. Molière's art has triumphed over secondary considerations of time or milieu.

But Molière's plays, though they reveal an admirable insight into human nature, concern themselves very little with the analysis of individual psychology. They do not reveal the early stages, or attempt to trace the evolution of the vice or foible which they hold up to ridicule. The character is projected on the stage when it has already reached supreme maturity. The author, by isolating its essential or basic trait, imagines a series of situations each one of which not merely adds to our knowledge of the character but illuminates its fundamental absurdity. But the character remains static. The action and progress of the play, the dramatic interest, spring from the opposition encountered by the monomaniac in a society composed of normal persons. And in this clash of wills it is the will of society that triumphs. Yet when the curtain falls, Harpagon is still a miser, Tartuffe a hypocrite, and Alceste a misanthrope. All that has happened is that they have ceased to disturb the miniature society, the immediate milieu, imagined by the playwright. Comedy of this kind, *la comédie de caractère*, is inevitably then more philosophical than psychological, since it concerns itself with the individual not as individual but as type and with the relations of that type to society and its institutions. It is, indeed, the old morality treated as comedy and raised to the highest degree of artistic perfection.

Now love, unless we take it in its extreme form, passion —which rules it out of comedy—is much less a social than an individual affair. Molière, who specialized in the extreme expressions of human nature, did not therefore regard love as a possible central theme of comedy. In all his plays it has a purely subsidiary rôle, and even in *Le Misanthrope* is simply one of the devices employed to emphasize the hero's mania, his inordinate love of sin-

cerity. Nor is Molière unique in this respect. So accustomed are we to associate love with comedy that we rarely pause to reflect that there are very few comedies devoted wholly to the theme of love. Love has provided the dramatist with inexhaustible matter for tragedy, pathos and farce, but not often for pure comedy. All the world no doubt loves a lover, and all the world is ready to pity or to sympathize with him, but very seldom to laugh at him. Yet we laugh at the snob, the miser, the parasite, the hypocrite. It is scarcely pertinent to object that in farce love provides food for laughter. What we laugh at here is not love but an exaggerated and irrational form of it like insane jealousy or maudlin romanticism. In this matter the playwright's difficulty seems to arise from the following fact. We are prepared to see comedy only in what we think ourselves to be immune from, and no one can sincerely cherish that illusion about love. There is another difficulty. How can the playwright dramatize love and retain it on the plane of pure comedy? A love comedy is obviously bound to consist largely of the analysis of the lovers' sentiments and emotions, their hopes, doubts, fears, repressions and disagreements,—excellent material for the leisurely pen of the novelist but hard to translate into action for the purpose of the comic stage.

All this Marivaux realized and more. Up to his time love as portrayed on the stage had been almost always tragic or pathetic since the dramatist had invariably imagined it as persecuted or thwarted. Always it encountered some strong external obstacle to its fulfilment. But was this really so in life? No doubt in France of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries parental authority was very much of a reality and *mariages de raison* were very common not only in the nobility but in the bour-

geoisie. On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive a France peopled entirely by harsh, unrelenting parents. Certainly Marivaux did not so conceive it, and one of his great claims to originality is that he broke completely with the "heavy father" tradition and created a new type of comedy based on the hypothesis that the chief obstacle to love is not external but internal since it is usually to be found in the lovers themselves. That obstacle is amour-propre, and all Marivaux's great comedies are born of the conflict between amour-propre and love, a conflict from which love inevitably emerges victorious. This was an artistic discovery of the first importance, for it opened the way to a more credible, more realistic treatment of love in the theatre, and indeed for the first time made love possible as a theme for pure comedy. The old adage that "the course of true love never did run smooth" received a new interpretation.

But why had Molière and Marivaux's other predecessors persisted in adhering to the old theme of persecuted love? One might defend their conservatism by pointing to the rise of feminism in Marivaux's time, a movement which was but one expression of the new spirit of revolt against established tradition. Marivaux was undoubtedly a strong feminist and indeed devoted a whole play, *L'École des Mères*, to the question of feminine education, vigorously attacking the repressive system then in vogue. Yet feminism existed in Molière's time. Did not Molière ridicule two of its most extreme aspects in the *Précieuses* and in the *Femmes savantes*? It would be wrong, I feel, to assume that Marivaux arrived at a stage in the evolution of French manners when it was no longer the fashion to force children to marry against their inclinations and that it was therefore easy for him to create a new type of comedy which mirrored that change. The conservatism

of Marivaux's predecessors can be explained in another way. They clung to the old traditional theme of persecuted love not because it reflected a general truth but because of its facile and infallible *romanesque* appeal. And to realize Marivaux's originality and independence we have only to recollect that in the imaginative literature of France from his day until the middle of the nineteenth century, love is still nearly always shown as striving against external obstacles.

The stereotyped conception of the society of Marivaux's time as consisting entirely of frail ladies, lecherous noblemen and down-trodden peasantry still persists and is likely to continue so long as the critics assume that the memoirs and correspondence of the eighteenth century represent the life of society as a whole. As a matter of fact, they reflect the manners of the small section of the French people who composed the court and town nobility. Yet critics of the eminence of Lanson shared that illusion, and, to explain the discrepancy between Marivaux's picture of manners and their own, they created the legend that his comedies, to quote M. Lanson, "are enacted in an ideal society, in the land of dreams." More indulgently Larroumet compares the atmosphere of Marivaux's plays to that of Watteau's paintings. "*Leaving for Cytherea*", he says, "is, as it were, the apotheosis of Marivaux's theatre."

Both judgments are completely false, unless indeed we confine ourselves to Marivaux's mythological plays, which are frankly *féeries*, and make no pretence at anything more. The opinions expressed by these critics, however, concern Marivaux's well-known comedies which, on the contrary, present very real characters moving in a real milieu. Marivaux was not interested in the life of the *haute noblesse*. His heroines are drawn from the

bourgeoisie and the provincial nobility, where forced marriages and cases of forced profession of vows were not the rule but the exception. His women are free to follow the inclinations of their hearts unhampered by external interference, and this for various but very probable reasons. His *jeunes filles* like Silvia of *Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard* or Lucile of *Les Serments indiscrets* have reasonable and indulgent parents. Sometimes his heroines, as in *La Surprise de l'Amour* or the *Fausses Confidences*, are rich young widows, or again, as in *L'Heureux Strategème* or *Le Legs*, they are independent ladies of the manor, old enough to manage their estates and their matrimonial affairs. Nor is there anything unreal or Watteau-like about the setting of the plays, which is usually the garden or the park of a country house. A brief discussion of the plays themselves will show, I think, the fallacy of the traditional opinion consecrated by Lanson and Larroumet.

Let us see how Marivaux exploited his fertile idea and from the conflict of love and amour-propre extracted at least ten excellent and completely different comedies. He was primarily an expert in everything connected with the psychology of love, and it was not for nothing that he frequented the *salons* of Madame de Lambert and of Madame de Tencin where the analysis of the passions, emotions and sentiments was practised as a fine art. Madame de Lambert was an ardent Platonist. It was she indeed who suggested that a school should be established to cultivate the soul and to purify love by bringing closer to the Platonic ideal. Marivaux, however, was too it much a realist to follow her into these regions and in fact rarely misses a chance of scoffing at those who regard love as a mystic fusion of twin-souls. The early stages of love, he noticed, are characterized by needless but inevitable

complications all traceable to amour-propre. Here, he felt, was ample material for comedy since there is nothing quite so amusing as to observe other people entangled in a network of quite unnecessary and complicated activities whether of an intellectual or physical sort. The drawings of Mr. Heath Robinson and the antics of the inimitable clown Grock are extreme illustrations of this truth. So, in most of Marivaux's comedies the characters live and move in a state of illusion as to their actual situation. Their amour-propre will not permit them to believe that they are falling in love and, assuming the guise of reason, invents amusingly rational and complicated explanations for their irrational behaviour. It is the contrast between the lover's anxiety to be reasonable in their conversations and actions, and the complete futility of the latter which Marivaux seizes upon and exploits for the purpose of comedy. An excellent example can be found in the *Fausses Confidences* (1737), whose heroine, a rich, young widow called Araminte, prides herself on her reasonableness. But, as the author suggests, nothing is more dangerous for a woman's peace of mind than this combination of pride and reason.

Dorante

Et tu me dis qu'elle est extrêmement raisonnable.

Dubois

Tant mieux pour vous, et tant pis pour elle. Si vous lui plaisez elle en sera si honteuse, elle se débattra tant, elle deviendra si faible qu'elle ne pourra se soutenir qu'en vous épousant. . . .

Events justify Dubois' prediction. A weaker, more sentimental woman would have admitted the danger of falling in love with the handsome, impecunious secretary and dismissed him before it was too late. Araminte, sure of her reasonableness, and, moreover, piqued by her

mother's interference, persists in keeping Dorante and finds perfectly rational motives for doing so despite incidents which show her that he is hopelessly in love. The essence of the comedy lies, however, in the fact that, as she is completely independent, she could at any moment have led up to a declaration and married Dorante. There is no obstacle to her happiness save this illusion that she is not the irrational type of widow who becomes infatuated with secretaries. So she passes from one complication to another until a letter written by Dorante to a friend and intercepted by her mother makes it quite impossible to feign further ignorance of the situation.

For Marivaux, amour-propre corresponds in our sentimental life to what in the physical domain is called self-preservation. It is the natural instinct which leads us jealously to guard our ego intact, and, of course, is opposed to love, which implies at least to some extent the surrender of our individual will. The whole comedy of existence for Marivaux then lies precisely in this illusion that we can keep our individuality intact and live a happy social life. In our effort to escape love we yield to our amour-propre and thus mortgage our liberty both of action and of speech. In *La Seconde Surprise de l'Amour* (1727) the hero, a chevalier, has just lost his fiancée, who has taken the veil. The heroine, a marquise, is a widow. Both regard themselves as unique examples of perfect constancy in a world where, as they agree, "il n'y a plus de moeurs, plus de sentiments". And when they fall in love their amour-propre will not allow them to admit that they could be so inconsistent as to change. Maliciously, the author plunges them into a series of complications. Jealousies and doubts arise, but still they cling desperately to the illusion that these are the natural results of their *parfaite amitie*. In a delightful scene they uncon-

sciously make love to each other by using that convenient verb *aimer* in its purely platonic sense.

Swiftly and smoothly they arrive at the critical point where they must definitely choose between amour-propre and love. The chevalier's friend and rival, the count, does not believe in platonic friendship, and the chevalier, to save his pride, is driven to say that he is not in love. That being so, says the wily count, the chevalier will not mind approaching the marquise on his behalf since it is practically certain she will consent to become *madame la comtesse*. Despair and jealousy of the poor chevalier, who, in a fit of pique, offers to marry the count's sister. The interview, the *scène obligatoire* between the chevalier and the marquise reveals Marivaux in one of his happiest moments. The chevalier tells of the count's questions.

La marquise

Ah! il parlait d'amour? Il est bien curieux. A votre place je n'aurais pas seulement voulu les distinguer. Qu'il devine.

Unfortunately, explains the chevalier, savouring his revenge, equivocation was not possible so that he was obliged to point out that there was no question of love, merely of friendship. But, inquires the marquise anxiously:

Croyez-vous l'avoir bien persuadé et croyez-vous lui avoir dit cela d'un ton bien vrai, du ton d'un homme qui le sent?

Here is the chevalier's chance to soothe his wounded pride and jealousy.

Oh, ne craignez rien . . j'y ai mis bon ordre et cela par une chose tout à fait imprévue: vous connaissez sa soeur; elle est riche, très aimable et de vos amies même.

La marquise (froidement)

Assez médiocrement.

Marivaux is a perfect artist. The action flows along limpidly and inevitably, always in harmony with the character of the actors. Now, unless the chevalier and the marquise are prepared to sacrifice their whole future happiness to their absurd amour-propre, love must have its way. The man, of course, will make the dénouement possible, but how, without too much damage to his pride? Marivaux cleverly compromises. The chevalier's servant hands the marquise a note written by the chevalier and then thrown away. In the final interview the lady produces this note at the opportune moment, thus sparing her embarrassed lover the complete humiliation of a prolonged declaration.

La marquise

Tenez chevalier, n'est-ce pas là le mot qui vous arrête.

Le chevalier

C'est mon billet. Ah! marquise, que voulez-vous que je devienne?

La marquise

Je rougis, chevalier; c'est vous répondre.

One can observe in all French comedy a certain architectural quality, a traditional respect for form which is not inherent in the comic theatre of England or Germany. The neo-classic authors attached an importance to the so-called unities which we now rightly regard as inordinate though it is easy to leap to the other extreme and deny the necessity for any sort of discipline whatever in the art of comedy. The ability to create character or situation will not in itself suffice to make a good comic author. A comedy, to be a comedy must have, as Aristotle pointed out, a beginning, a middle and an end. The French have always realized this; the English and Germans only occasionally. As a result, the French

theatre has a much larger repertory of good comedies than either the English or German. The respect for form obliges the French playwright to canalize or concentrate his *vis comica*, and instinctively to reject what is not relevant to his original hypothesis. In consequence even in third-rate authors where the *donnée* of the play is slight and the characterization equally so, the action has tenseness and there is a certain vitality in the dialogue. Marivaux's plays are beautifully constructed—that is to say, with the art which conceals art. Yet every comedy proves on examination to flow from a clear-cut hypothesis which itself is but a facet of the basic idea underlying all Marivaux's comedies, the conception of humanity as a prey to the conflicting instincts of amour-propre and love. It is the art with which this fertile idea is exploited that reveals the power of his creative imagination.

In *Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard* he takes as his hypothesis an improbable situation common in farce and from it extracts a charming comedy. The hero Dorante and the heroine Silvia hesitate to leap blindfold into matrimony. Unknown to the other they change places with their servants, the better to study each other's character at the first interview. Now Silvia, who prides herself on being a *jeune fille raisonnable*, finds to her bewilderment that she has fallen in love with a valet. The play might here have ended with the simultaneous enlightenment of the lovers, but Marivaux is too clever for that. Instead, he arranges that Silvia shall know the truth before Dorante. In one masterly line, *Ah! je vois clair dans mon coeur*, Marivaux reveals the relief and joy which the *éclaircissement* brings to her self-esteem; and the dramatic interest, changing direction, is endowed with fresh life. Silvia's amour-propre must have its revenge. Dorante must offer to marry her in her rôle of soubrette

to satisfy what her good-natured father calls her "insatiable vanité d'amour-propre".

L'Heureux Stratagème is based on an interesting situation. Damis has been jilted by his fiancée, a comtesse who from sheer vanity steals another woman's lover. The other woman, a marquise, joins forces with Damis. They pretend to fall in love and keep up the comedy till the moment of signing the contract of marriage. Marivaux shrewdly leaves the whole conduct of the intrigue to the marquise, and the comedy becomes an amusing and spirited battle of wits between two clever women. At one juncture Dorante is content to call a halt, and the countess nearly saves her amour-propre by pretending that she was merely testing his love.

> La comtesse
>
> . . . J'ai poussé les choses un peu loin; vous avez pu y être trompé; je ne veux point vous juger à la rigueur; je ferme les yeux sur votre conduite et je vous pardonne.

But she cannot bluff another woman, and only when the comtesse surrenders her last shred of amour-propre does the marquise relent and say to Dorante, "Rendez-vous à présent, Dorante, vous êtes aimé".

Les Serments indiscrets is another charming domestic play with all the amusing complications that one usually associates with farce. Yet so probable are the situations, so inevitably do they arise from the original hypothesis that never once does Marivaux descend from the plane of pure comedy. Lucile is engaged to Damis and is about to meet him for the first time. But her sensitive amour-propre recoils from the thought of marriage; for lovers, when they become husbands are apt to lose their gallantry and respectful submissiveness. She sends her servant Lisette to meet Damis and to give him a letter outlining

her objections and indicating how he can smooth over matters with their fathers. Damis arrives but not in a state of suppressed ardour. On the contrary, he is most embarrassed, for he does not want to get married at all. Lisette, knowing that Lucile is listening, maliciously leads him on and asks him if he will be of the same mind when he sees her mistress. Damis replies confidently, "Je vous réponds de mon coeur". That is too much for Lucile's amour-propre. "Et moi du mien, monsieur, je vous le promets," she ejaculates emerging suddenly from her hiding-place. The action, suddenly released, leaps forward with magnificent *élan*. After a quarrel scene full of verve, Damis, in love, but with his pride thoroughly aroused, adopts Lucile's original idea that he should pretend to make love to her sister Phénice and thus make it possible for Lucile to refuse him.

Phénice is bored at first by his attentions but, stung by a scornful remark of her sister's, pretends to take Damis seriously. Lucile is seized with jealousy, which her amour-propre interprets as natural solicitude for her little sister's happiness! Now the parents complicate matters. With unconscious irony, thinking that the sisters are hesitating out of delicate consideration for each other, they assure Lucile that they quite understand. Lucile need not marry Damis. They beam on Phénice and Damis, "une véritable union de coeurs, un vrai mariage d'inclination!" Lucile in desperation tries to prevent the wedding, not, of course, because she is in love—this she will not admit even to herself—but, as she lamely tells her father, because the situation is rather humiliating for her. People will say she was jilted. This is too far-fetched since, of course, everyone knows she refused Damis. Phénice wickedly withholds the dénouement till the last possible

moment, and the curtain falls on a very much chastened Lucile.

Every conceivable *nuance* of amour-propre is reflected in Marivaux's theatre. In the first *Surprise de l'Amour* he brings together a misogynist and a man-hater; in *Les Sincères* a man and a woman who pride themselves on their unique candour and, of course, quickly detest each other. The *Préjugé vaincu*, a charming satire on pride of rank, shows snobbery vanquished by love, and the heroine practically driven to propose to her bourgeois lover. In *Le Legs* we meet a brusque and somewhat terrifying lady who has no patience with sentimental nonsense. So well has she convinced her admirer, the marquis, of her sincerity, that he dares not propose. Yet she wants him to, though now he is so accustomed to being hopelessly in love that it never occurs to him to ask for her hand. He assumes, of course, that she would be furious. So when the countess tries to lead him to the question, he draws back cautiously, fearful of ridicule and with a comic blend of indulgence and annoyance treats the affair as a joke. Here are the closing lines of a scene that in its way is almost unique in comedy:

La comtesse

Apprenez donc, lorsqu'on dit aux gens qu'on les aime, qu'il faut du moins leur demander ce qu'ils en pensent.

Le marquis

Quel chicane vous me faites!

La comtesse

Je n'y saurais tenir; adieu.

Le marquis

En bien! madame, je vous aime; qu'en pensez-vous? Et encore une fois qu'en pensez-vous!

La comtesse

> Ah! ce que j'en pense? Que je le veux bien, monsieur; et encore une fois, que je le veux bien; car si je ne m'y prenais pas de cette façon-là nous ne finirions jamais.

Marivaux remains undisputed master in the genre which he created, the psychological comedy of love. To understand all that this infers one must remember the extraordinary difficulties which he had to overcome. It is no easy task even in the ample and elastic cadre of the novel to unravel the tangle of emotions, sentiments and ideas which motivate the behaviour of those whom we vaguely describe as "falling in love". How much harder is the task of the comic author. For his effects must be instantaneous. The phrase which charms us in a novel, subtle and pregnant with secret significance, the phrase one lingers over and rereads with delight, becomes, when heard over the footlights, drab, meaningless and maybe absurd. That is why the comedy of psychological analysis is so difficult to write and, of course, difficult to act. In Rosa Benozzi (Silvia), Marivaux was fortunate enough to discover an actress ideally qualified to interpret the charm and subtlety of his heroines. Unhappily she has had few successors. In France, the two national theatres, the Français and the Odéon, have a virtual monopoly of the "classics", and these famous schools of acting, admirable in many respects, cultivate in comedy a certain rigidity of manner, whereas Marivaux's rôles require above all fluidity and spontaneity.

For another reason Marivaux's comedies, though they are the reverse of "high-brow", appeal only to a certain section of the public. As they deal almost entirely with the analysis of love, they alienate both the *épicier du coin* and the Voltairian intellectual. Most people demand that love shall be treated on the stage as tragic passion, as a

pathetic weakness, as namby-pamby sentimentalism, as howling farce, or more recently as scientifically disguised erethrism. They are disconcerted by Marivaux's matter-of-fact and realistic attitude. He has no *coups de foudre*, no duels, elopements, irate parents, abductions, or wicked guardians; no sneering, polished villains, or persecuted, ravished, compromised or seduced heroines; no nymphomaniacs, Lesbians or ladies *oozing* with "life-force". For him falling in love is not a mystic or devastating phenomenon like religious conversion, but an imperceptible, natural process which is not, however, achieved without a struggle. His women are delightfully real with a human spice of caprice and quick temper. His lovers are equally intelligent, ardent without being sensual and, like the women, easily wounded in their amour-propre. Romantics rather annoy Marivaux, and he deals with one very effectively in *La Mère confidente*. The impetuous Dorante has made plans to elope with Angélique in the approved romantic fashion. The coach is waiting, complete with elderly duenna, when Angélique arrives accompanied, however, by her mother, Madame Argante.

Dorante

. . . . Un enlèvement n'est pas un crime, c'est une irrégularité que le mariage efface. Nous nous serions donné notre foi mutuelle et Angélique, en me suivant, n'aurait fui qu'avec son époux.

Angélique (à part)

Elle ne se payera pas de ces raisons-là.

Madame Argante

Son époux, monsieur! Suffit-il d'en prendre le nom pour l'être. Et de quel poids, s'il vous plaît, serait cette foi mutuelle dont vous parlez? Vous vous croieriez donc mariés, parce que, dans l'étourderie d'un transport amoureux, il vous aurait plu de vous

dire: "Nous le sommes"? Les passions seraient bien à leur aise, si leur emportement rendait tout légitime.

No duels, no horsewhippings, no convents: simply the douche of cold common-sense opportunely administered. Dorante does marry Angélique because the shrewd old lady realizes that he is not an incurable romantic but a sane young fellow suffering from a temporary aberration. None of Marivaux's characters is like Molière's, incurable. He is not, like Molière, a specialist in abnormal psychology. Marivaux's characters overcome their particular form of the malady, amour-propre. His older people are usually sensible bourgeois like M. Orgon, whose splendid philosophy—which is that of the author—is summed up in that priceless line, "Va, dans ce monde, il faut être un peu trop bon pour l'être assez". Occasionally, however, we run across amusing elderly irascibles like Madame Argante and M. Remy of the *Fausses Confidences*. And when they clash the audience can expect an authentic *mot pour rire* like this:

Monsieur Remy

Comment donc! m'imposer silence! à moi, procureur! Savez-vous bien qu'il y a cinquante ans que je parle, madame Argante?

Madame Argante

Il y a donc cinquante ans que vous ne savez ce que vous dites.

Or, more subtle:

Dorante

Je vous demande pardon, madame, si je vous interromps. J'ai lieu de présumer que mes services ne vous sont plus agréables, et dans la conjoncture présente il est naturel que je sache mon sort.

Madame Argante

Son sort! Le sort d'un intendant; que cela est beau!

Monsieur Remy

Et pourquoi n'aurait-il pas un sort?

There is a comic crescendo in the reiteration of that word *sort* which gives one the measure of Marivaux's force. It takes a first-rate writer to realize the comedy that is latent in an ordinary colourless word, but emerges if we remove it from its habitual context or milieu. It is easy, of course, by this method to create farce, either by puns or malapropisms. The bigger men, however, like Marivaux in the above example and Molière with his "il sait du grec!" contrive to achieve by this device a purely comic effect.

WORDSWORTH AND THE CLASSICS

DOUGLAS BUSH

WHILE every age considers its estimate of great writers of the past to be the true and final one, we of the present may perhaps be allowed to think that in some essential ways we are closer to the real Wordsworth than even Arnold was, though Arnold, according to Quiller-Couch, had a tendency to regard himself as Wordsworth's widow. The Victorians, beset by science and scepticism, and groping for an undogmatic faith, reverenced the poet who gave them a natural religion; we, who have got far beyond such naive gropings, and recoil from a plaster embodiment of virtue and nobility, feel a new respect for the poet who gave to society a natural daughter. Wordsworth has become, so to speak, one of ourselves, and we can look at him as at any inhabitant of our brave new world. (I have sometimes thought that nothing would contribute so much to another critical rehabilitation as the discovery that Frances Ridley Havergal was the daughter of Tennyson and, say, Geraldine Jewsbury). But, apart from chatter about Caroline, we do understand Wordsworth and his background better than the Victorians did. We know that some of his essential roots were in the so-called age of reason, we know more about his philosophic and poetic evolution, we do not neglect the *Prelude* and the *Excursion*, and we recognize Wordsworth as the most richly germinal of all the romantic poets.

A popular notion, not yet quite dead, has pictured a prematurely cow-like son of Cumberland, ruminating forever in the fields, sometimes lowering a rustic bucket into the deep well of his own consciousness and bringing up a poem which, whether good or bad, was a purely

personal "effusion", and owed little or nothing to literary tradition. We have become aware, rather belatedly, that, in spite of weak eyes, Wordsworth was from his youth up an ardent reader in English and foreign literature. Even as a child of the mountains, he says in the eleventh book of the *Prelude*, and before he had read the classics, he had "learnt to dream of Sicily", and he goes on to salute Theocritus. In addition to the open and tacit evidence of his prefaces and notes and many poems, a glance at the catalogue of his library ought to have killed long ago the legend of his indifference to books. Among his nearly three thousand volumes—and Wordsworth had neither the vanity nor the money to buy books for show—were enough classical authors to do credit to a college don. He had a special interest in ancient history. And, to come to our subject proper, this poet of man and nature was, strange as it may sound, the fountain-head from which flowed much of the great stream of nineteenth-century poetry on classical themes. It was he more than anyone else—for we need not take much account of the melodious "blessings of Tighe" and her kind—who revived the classical genre and prescribed its manner and moral tone. The classical poems of Tennyson, for instance, are in the didactic tradition of *Laodamia*, though their style has been coloured by Keats, and Keats's conception of myth, we remember, owed much to Wordsworth.

The lover of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was the boy who revelled in the *Arabian Nights*, who was later thankful that his early passion for romance had not been snuffed out by Rousseauistic educators, and who, later still, protested against Niebuhr's scientific destruction of the heroic legends of Roman history. But the note on *Lycoris* must be quoted at length:

"But surely one who has written so much in verse as I have done may be allowed to retrace his steps in the regions of fancy which delighted him in his boyhood, when he first became acquainted with the Greek and Roman poets. Before I read Virgil I was so strongly attached to Ovid, whose *Metamorphoses* I read at school, that I was quite in a passion whenever I found him, in books of criticism, placed below Virgil. As to Homer, I was never weary of travelling over the scenes through which he led me. Classical literature affected me by its own beauty. But the truths of Scripture having been entrusted to the dead languages, and these fountains having recently been laid open at the Reformation, an importance and a sanctity were at that period attached to classical literature that extended, as is obvious in Milton's *Lycidas* for example, both to its spirit and form in a degree that can never be revived. No doubt the hacknied and lifeless use into which mythology fell towards the close of the 17th century, and which continued through the 18th, disgusted the general reader with all allusion to it in modern verse; and though, in deference to this disgust, and also in a measure participating in it, I abstained in my earlier writings from all introduction of pagan fable, surely, even in its humble form, it may ally itself with real sentiment, as I can truly affirm it did in the present case."

More than two centuries earlier Donne had led a reaction against the decorative and idealistic mythology of his Ovidian contemporaries. But the Ovidian tradition of the Renaissance survived, and reached its magnificent culmination in Milton. After Milton came the deluge. The mythological allusions of the eighteenth century are in the main showy and shoddy upholstery,

as cheap and meaningless as the capitalized abstractions that accompanied, or, to some degree, replaced them. It was quite natural that the younger Wordsworth should prefer to sit on old grey stones rather than on such "parlor" furniture of faded plush (though the *Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* reveal every other vice of eighteenth-century style). But, like most artists who have rebelled against effete conventions of the immediate past, Wordsworth was in touch with an older and better tradition. His chosen masters were the four greatest English poets, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, poets who had delighted in Ovid and classical story; under their influence, especially that of Milton, it was inevitable, apart from other reasons, that Wordsworth's initial antipathy to myth should diminish. The poetry of the great decade certainly contains far less mythology than the later and generally inferior work; the fact is partly but not wholly explained by age and failing inspiration, for Wordsworth wrote more good stuff after 1807 than he is commonly given credit for.

The *Excursion* was one of the three things in his age for which Keats gave thanks, and the great passages in the fourth book on the origin and significance of myth must have been both an inspiration and a confirmation of his own instincts; indeed the core of *Hyperion*, the speech of Oceanus, might almost be called a summary of various parts of the *Excursion*. Wordsworth's lines are no mere purple patch, they have an integral place in his high argument. The Solitary, the disciple of Voltaire, overcome by disillusionment and despair of truth, has taken refuge in cynical apathy, has cut himself off from man and nature. But, declares the Wanderer, even humble children of the ancient east possessed a natural piety, a religious imagination. (In the middle of the

sixth book, it may be remembered, is a passage on the allegory implicit in myth; the stories of Prometheus, Tantalus, the line of Thebes, are fictions in form, but in their substance tremendous truths). The rustic Greek, however ignorant or superstitious, lived close to the spirit of nature, in intimate communion with the deities of sun and moon and wood and stream. Through such forms of the divine were nourished the admiration, hope, and love by which we live, and perhaps too that faith in "Life continuous, Being unimpaired", which strengthens and sustains the frail creatures of a day. When the mind admits the law of duty, man gains dominion over experience, ascends in dignity of being and in spiritual power. As the moon rises behind a grove and turns all the dark foliage to silver,

> Like power abides
> In man's celestial spirit; virtue thus
> Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
> A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire.

In the same spirit as these passages on the myth-making religion of the Greeks is that great outburst in the sonnet *The world is too much with us*. It is an impertinence to quote the lines:

> Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

We have here too a Miltonic complexity of literary allu-

sion. Although Wordsworth was a reader of Plato, the Platonism of the *Intimations of Immortality* is rather, as Professors Rea, Pierce, and Hartman have shown, the Platonism of Proclus and Coleridge. The sonnet was apparently written in 1802, at the same time as parts of the *Ode*, and this sentence from Proclus (translated in Thomas Taylor's *Plato*) has connections with both the *Ode* and the sonnet: "It is requisite therefore that the soul which is about to be led properly from hence to that ever vigilant nature, should amputate those second and third powers which are suspended from its essence, in the same manner as weeds, stones, and shells, from the marine Glaucus; should restrain its externally proceeding impulses, and recollect true beings and a divine essence, from which it descended, and to which it is fit that the whole of our life should hasten."

As Professor Rea suggests, Wordsworth's "Pagan" is Proclus, one of the last opponents of Christianity, and Glaucus (who belongs to Plato's *Republic*) has become Proteus, a deity more familiar through *Paradise Lost* (iii, 604) and *The Faerie Queene*. Triton's wreathed horn comes of course from Spenser's *Colin Clout* and *Comus*. (The *Ode* likewise, as Miss Potts has lately pointed out, has many reminiscences of both Spenser and Milton). In spite of all this borrowing, Wordsworth's lines are completely original and spontaneous. The classical allusions, though beautifully decorative, are essential to the statement of the idea; to a situation of universal appeal, felt by the poet with prophetic intensity, they add their unique quality of rich, even sublime, suggestion. The sonnet is the finest example in Wordsworth, and one of the finest in English poetry, of the inspired recreation of myth.

Laodamia is, of course, the chief poetic fruit of Words-

worth's renewed reading, with his son, of some ancient authors, especially Virgil. Ovid supplied some details for the poem, though his epistle naturally could not treat the return of Protesilaus, and Ovid's heroine, while not without pathos, comes dangerously close to humour in her exhortation to her husband to remember that his prowess should be displayed not in war but in love. Some hints for Laodamia's immoderate passion, as well as for Protesilaus' patriotic self-sacrifice, Wordsworth took over from Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*. But the essential classical source is the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. It is a commonplace that Tennyson, at his best, is the most Virgilian of nineteenth-century poets; the fact is less often recognized that his nearest rival is the unbookish Wordsworth. The evidence in Wordsworth, to be sure, consists of only a few lines, but those lines show that no English poet has absorbed with richer understanding, or caught with more wistful beauty, the spirit of Virgil's picture of the underworld.

One of the obvious initial suggestions was Virgil's mention of Laodamia among the shades of unhappy lovers. The chief concrete items derived from the sixth book include the opening sacrifices to the infernal gods, the attitude of the suppliant Laodamia (modelled on that of the priestess), her vain attempt to embrace the ghost of her husband, and the description of Elysium and the heroic arts there pursued. This last passage is partly inspired translation, partly something more.

> In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
> Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
> Brought from a pensive though a happy place.
>
> He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel

In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.*

"An ampler ether, a diviner air" is Virgil, rendered with literal felicity, but touched also with the Platonic radiance that illumines this and other parts of the poem; and the second and third lines of the quotation, which owe nothing directly to Virgil, are the concentrated essence of Virgil's melancholy grace of style, his high, grave pity, tenderness, and hope.

Wordsworth's treatment of his heroine is not altogether Virgilian. Laodamia, like Dido, is passionate, and, so far as conventions go, with more justification (though her vulgar outspokenness outraged the modesty of that British matron, Sara Coleridge). But Dido captured Virgil's sympathy to such a degree that, for many readers, she throws the poem out of focus; Wordsworth, though at first lenient, even sympathetic, grew

* His demum exactis, perfecto munere divae,
devenere locos laetos et amoena virecta
fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.
largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.
pars in gramineis exercent membra palestris,
contendunt ludo et fulva luctantur harena;
pars pedibus plaudunt choreas et carmina dicunt.
Aeneid VI, 637-644

much more severe, as later editions show, in meting out punishment to Laodamia. And while Protesilaus has a sense of duty and discipline that is worthy of Aeneas, his moral seriousness is perhaps more Puritan than Roman.

> Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
> Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
> The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
> A fervent, not ungovernable, love. . . .
>
> Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
> Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
> Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
> For this the passion to excess was driven—
> That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
> The fetters of a dream opposed to love.

Here again we have Platonism, but it is Platonism that has, I think, filtered through Milton. At the end of the eighth book of *Paradise Lost* the angel's advice to Adam includes Platonic sentiments, yet with a characteristic Miltonic emphasis on the dangers of conjugal sensuality:

> What higher in her society thou find'st
> Attractive, human, rational, love still:
> In loving thou dost well; in passion not,
> Wherein true love consists not. Love refines
> The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat
> In Reason, and is judicious; is the scale
> By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend,
> Not sunk in carnal pleasure.

Milton's theme in *Comus*, the two epics, and *Samson*

Agonistes is of course the conflict between sensual temptation and human reason, a divine gift, allied with obedience to the divine will. In *Paradise Lost* and *Samson* there is an undertone of sadness, a deeper realization of the nature of evil and of human weakness; Adam, and still more Samson, are human beings who have fallen. Samson, like Job, has even a sense of God's desertion, which Milton renders with such sympathy that Samson's ultimate victory does not annul our impression of his tragic sin, suffering, and despair. In *Comus* and *Paradise Regained*, on the other hand, virtue and reason are quite unassailable; evil hardly becomes a reality, and its defeat is never for a moment in doubt. Whereas *Paradise Lost* and *Samson* stir us profoundly, are proved upon our pulses (to use Keats's words), *Comus* and *Paradise Regained* we admire from the outside as pieces of beautiful writing. *Laodamia*, it must be said, belongs with the latter pair; we feel that from the beginning Laodamia appeared to the poet not as a woman, but as a object lesson. And here I may quote some penetrating sentences from André Gide:

"It is important to consider that the struggle between classicism and romanticism goes on within every mind. And it is of this very struggle that the work of art should be born; the classical work relates the triumph of order and moderation over the romantic element in the artist. The work is beautiful in proportion to the strength of the conquered element. If the element has been conquered in advance the work is frigid and without interest."

In *Laodamia* the victory has been won in advance, and if the poem is not quite cold and devoid of interest it is

because we almost forget the lack of inner fire in the majestic beauty of the style.

Laodamia is too familiar a poem to contain any surprises for even the casual reader of Wordsworth, yet there is an obvious gulf between its appeal to rational self-control and the earlier poems so often cited by Professor Babbitt, for instance, in proof of the poet's reliance for moral wisdom upon nature, expansive emotion, and intuition. Or one might compare its treatment of love with the ardour of youthful experience which flames up in *Vaudracour and Julia:*

> The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine;
> Her chamber-window did surpass in glory
> The portals of the dawn; all Paradise
> Could, by the simple opening of a door,
> Let itself in upon him. . . .

The young lover who felt these ecstasies would not have condemned Laodamia. Does Wordsworth's growing faith in reason and self-discipline mean that the romanticist is becoming classical (whatever *that* means!), or is this classicism merely a reversion to the mingled timidity and moralizing of the eighteenth-century classicist, a mark of the poet's own advancing years? Has he achieved a Sophoclean grasp of law and imaginative reason, or has he only put off the old man to put on the old woman?

Such questions are perhaps unanswerable, but some stages in the process are clear enough, and we may step backward in order to trace in the briefest outline the changing attitudes registered in poems that preceded *Laodamia.* Before doing so it might be well to make some general qualifications. It would be easy to draw upon poems of the same or even a later period for ex-

pressions of faith in nature and intuition rather than reason and discipline, and most of the great poetry by which Wordsworth lives is of that kind. But some of the most familiar lines in disparagement of books and reason are dramatic, even playful, and the more serious outbursts, we should remember, come from a man who had grounds for condemning a false secondary power; he had turned for salvation to Godwinism, the intellectual and bookish system *par excellence*, and, finding it both inadequate and dangerous, had yielded up moral questions in despair. Further, "Reason in her most exalted mood" is for Wordsworth another name for "Imagination". In the poems that we shall glance at, "Reason" is coming to include more and more of "reason" in its ordinary sense.

In *Ruth* (1799) the heroine's lover is carried away by the lawless impulses of uncivilized life and "the beauteous forms of nature" which, though they contribute something to "noble sentiment", can also "feed voluptuous thought"; he becomes "the slave of low desires", a man "without self-control". In *Resolution and Independence* (1802) the young poet censures himself for having lived "as if life's business were a summer mood", and he hopes to gain strength and stability by remembering the firm mind, the fortitude, the grave but cheerful piety of the old leech-gatherer, who is a humble example of inner mastery. The patriotic sonnets of 1802, written under Miltonic influence, and recording the anxieties of a time of stress, seek support in contemplation of heroic minds and careers, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Algernon Sidney, Milton himself, most noble and resolute of patriots. Recoiling too from the spectacle of greed and idolatry of wealth, Wordsworth turns less often to nature than to "the homely beauty of the good old cause", to

"pure religion breathing household laws", and the traditions of English liberty.

A number of relevant passages might be quoted from the *Prelude*, but we must be content with these, taken from the last book in the version of 1805-06:

> . . . thou call'st this love
> And so it is, but there is higher love
> Than this, a love that comes into the heart
> With awe and a diffusive sentiment;
> Thy love is human merely; this proceeds
> More from the brooding Soul, and is divine. . . .
>
> And so the deep enthusiastic joy,
> The rapture of the Hallelujah sent
> From all that breathes and is, was chasten'd, stemm'd
> And balanced by a Reason which indeed
> Is reason; duty and pathetic truth. . . .

Wordsworth's faith in reason and "a calm, a beautiful, and silent fire" is most notable of course in that group of poems of 1805, the *Ode to Duty*, *Elegiac Stanzas*, and the *Character of the Happy Warrior*. They were written, like the last part of the *Prelude*, under the shadow of his brother's death, a loss which had thrown him back upon his ultimate resources. The special quality of the poems owes something also to literary influence, not only to Milton, as before, but to Vaughan and Herbert; when a deep distress had humanized his soul, Wordsworth could not read these poets without being moved by their sober exposition of a faith on trial. In *Duty*, Wordsworth pays tribute to the glad souls who are instinctively and intuitively good (though he has doubts of their "staying power"), and, as in *Resolution and*

Independence, he censures himself for having too blindly reposed his trust; conscious of weakness, he prays for the calm of discipline, the confidence of reason. In the *Elegiac Stanzas* he again contrasts his earlier and his later self; he has submitted, in the reality of grief, to a new control, and welcomes

> fortitude, and patient cheer,
> And frequent sights of what is to be borne!

The "happy warrior" is of course a personification of "duty" as well as a composite ideal portrait. His law is reason, and in the face of vicissitudes he exercises the power "which is our human nature's highest dower", that is, he transmutes all experience into spiritual strength and serenity. (And, by the way, unlike Laodamia he is not betrayed by "thought of tender happiness").

There is not much that is specifically Christian in these stoic poems, though duty is the stern daughter of the voice of God (the phrase echoes Milton's lines on the human conscience), and the happy warrior is confident of heaven's applause. The same lesson of high and composed endurance, with more religious colouring, is learned by the heroine of the *White Doe of Rylstone* (1807-08), whose soul

> doth in itself stand fast,
> Sustained by memory of the past
> And strength of Reason; held above
> The infirmities of mortal love;
> Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
> And awfully impenetrable.

Some relevant passages in the *Excursion* have already

been touched upon, and that poem is so largely concerned with "reason's steadfast rule' over passions that "hold a fluctuating seat", with submission to the law of conscience, with the search for the

> central peace, subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation,

that it would be idle to assemble quotations. But there may be room for one that is especially close in spirit to *Laodamia*:

> Whate'er we see,
> Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine;
> Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
> Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier heights
> Of divine love, our intellectual soul.

One might recall too Wordsworth's use of that Senecan couplet from Daniel:

> And that unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!

Thus, if the reader has not been lamed with reasons (some of which I owe to an essay by Professor James Tupper) it is clear that the doctrine which receives such stately expression in *Laodamia* does not represent a unique or isolated mood. The array of references may suggest also, whatever the motives that prompted the later endings of *Laodamia*, that Wordsworth did not, during some years at least, merely grow old and timid, but that, especially under the shock of grief, he fought a real battle to arrive (to quote here, for variety, the words of Keats) at "the top of sovereignty", the power

> to bear all naked truths,
> And to envisage circumstance, all calm.

But, as we have observed already, in a number of Wordsworth's later poems the struggle seems to have receded into the past, and a "classical" faith in reason, order, moderation, may become only copy-book wisdom of the Polonian kind, or conventional pietism. If *Laodamia* is questionable on that score, *Dion* (1816) is still more so. The ghostly visitation, in Plutarch only a bad omen, is given a moral interpretation, and the hero himself remains a phantom. Though *Dion* has much of the same nobility of style as *Laodamia*, the poem cannot come to life when its subject is not conceived emotionally, but is taken as an occasion for moralizing.

These poems are often spoken of, and were in their own day, as, for Wordsworth, *tours de force*. They certainly appear un-Wordsworthian in style if one comes to them directly from *Tintern Abbey* or the Lucy poems. But if we had space, as we have not, to trace Wordsworth's stylistic evolution through the splendour of *Intimations of Immortality* and the frequent sublimity of the *Excursion*, we should find a fairly steady increase in the amount of classicized diction. Sometimes there is a truly Miltonic *afflatus*, sometimes only eighteenth-century inflation. If it is a long way from "And never lifted up a single stone" to "And she expects the issue in repose", what shall be said, even if the image was suggested by the Elgin marbles, of "mourn, Ilissus, bending o'er thy classic urn"? Here we have, in a sense, come full circle; we turn back to *Descriptive Sketches* to find "Hope that ceaseless leans on Pleasure's urn". But the Miltonic Wordsworth, at his best, can now and then gain effects impossible for the Wordsworth of Saxon monosyllables (as Sir Thomas Browne can do things denied to Bunyan), and we could ill spare the ornate dignity of the best parts of the *Excursion*, *Lao-*

damia, *Dion*, and such scattered beauties as "an incommunicable sleep" and "the unimaginable touch of Time". Not that Wordsworth lost his command of pregnant simplicity. One may recall the great lines on Newton added, in the poet's old age, to the *Prelude*, or the lament of one who has outlived his literary generation—

> How fast has brother followed brother,
> From sunshine to the sunless land!

Here the last phrase carries an aura of classical suggestion like that of Housman's "strengthless dead".

In discussing various peripheral matters I have, I fear, belied my title, and have left little room for the large body of classical allusion in Wordsworth's later writings. His changing attitude towards myth was somewhat parallel to his changing attitude towards nature. With the fading of the vision and the faculty divine, with the lessening frequency of those moments of mystical insight, "spots of time", Wordsworth had to be content (apart from the great compensations he described) with the quiet pleasures of the ordinary meditative observer. So too, in regard to myth, the imagination that had called up Proteus and Triton from the sea dwindled into uninspired fancy. It may be the playful humour of the scholar at large, as when, on landing at Calais (1820), Wordsworth, in the spirit of a popular notion that the sea contains "the likeness of whate'er on land is seen", wonders if there are nereids as "withered, grotesque, immeasurably old", as the French fishwomen. The conceit is handled with ease and tact, and the result is happy enough, on its own level—but it is not Wordsworth's level.

More often, in the verse of Wordsworth's last thirty

years or so, mythological allusions are less happy and spontaneous offshoots of the jaded literary fancy. Bookish reminiscences can be inspired and charged with rich emotion, as we have seen, but when emotion has been too largely replaced by tranquillity, when the poet goes on writing because it is his vocation, such reminiscences are likely to become conventional tags of ornament. In a poem entitled *The Russian Fugitive* we may not expect such an allusion to Phoebus and Daphne as opens the third part, and the conscientious poet records his debt to Golding's *Metamorphoses*. Wordsworth's chief English creditor is Milton, and, while a list of his obligations would raise an undesirable cloud of footnotes, a few items will suggest how, in Wordsworth's later writing, Miltonic fire has gone out. The allusion to the "Orphean lyre" in the invocation to light is one of the finest examples in Milton of mythological symbolism. Wordsworth's own earnest search for truth gives something of Miltonic seriousness to the phrase in the first book of the *Prelude*,

> immortal verse
> Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre,

though the result is prosaic and the "immortal verse" of *L'Allegro* calls up associations which are out of key. We move forward to the sonnet *The Source of the Danube* (1821), and find that the "Orphean lyre" has become a mere commonplace decoration. Trying to describe the indescribable beauties of Eden, Milton invokes the suggestive splendours of mythological scenes, including

> that Nyseian isle,
> Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
> Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Lybian Jove,

Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye.

Wordsworth may have read Diodorus Siculus, or Ralegh's *History*, but he certainly remembered Milton:

Wild Relique! beauteous as the chosen spot
In Nysa's isle, the embellished grot;
Whither, by care of Libyan Jove,
(High Servant of paternal Love)
Young Bacchus was conveyed—to lie
Safe from his step-dame Rhea's eye. . . .

This does not seem an altogether inevitable conclusion to *The Brownie's Cell*, the first of the *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1814*.

A similar bookishness appears in the aging poet's tendency to see dryads behind every hedge, though his visions are less ecstatic than those of Keats. In 1803 Wordsworth saw, with genuine rapture, a simple Highland girl and a solitary reaper. In the sixth book of the *Excursion* a country girl suggests a Titian painting an oread or a dryad, and in 1821 (*The Three Cottage Girls*) a Swiss maiden recalls wood-nymphs of Diana's throng. And when one thinks of Wordsworth's innumerable loving descriptions of field and wood and stream, of bird and flower and, above all, of man and the heart of man, and when one thinks also of his remark about Keats's *Hymn to Pan*, one wonders what the young poet would have said if he had known that in time his elder would stoop (in his *On the Power of Sound*) to imitate the very pagan and Titianesque picture of Bacchus and his crew:

The pipe of Pan, to shepherds

Couched in the shadow of Mænalian pines,
Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the leopards,
That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,
How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang!
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
In cadence,—and Silenus swang
This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned.

But even in his lighter use of myth Wordsworth was no pagan. The nymphs in his brake, unlike Swinburne's, are clothed to the neck in British woollens. Apart from mythology, of course, Wordsworth is subject to occasional insular or parochial visitations. Here, for instance, are two lines of splendour in simplicity, followed by something else:

From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread!

In one of his good though not great sonnets, *Pelion and Ossa* (which owes some of its classical allusions to Spenser's *Virgil's Gnat*), Skiddaw, "our British Hill", "is nobler far" than Parnassus. And Wordsworth's nymphs leave Greek and Ovidian morality behind them, as in *The Triad*, where

Mere Mortals, bodied forth in vision still,
Shall with Mount Ida's triple lustre fill
The chaster coverts of a British hill.

In this connection one cannot help recalling a malicious Wordsworthian anecdote lately recovered by Mr. P. P.

Howe from the magazine version of Hazlitt's *On the Ignorance of the Learned:*

"'My God!' said a celebrated author of the present day, when introduced to a collection of books of prints and antiques, 'what a quantity of things you have here, and then there are those devils in the corner', pointing to a group of Cupid and Psyche in the room. . . . There is only one person in the three kingdoms of whom this story is credible."

This is not the note on which one would choose to end, for the classical element in Wordsworth is not negligible and colours some of his best as well as his inferior writing. There are, too, other aspects I should like to touch on, but this paper has already exceeded proper limits, and at the suggestion of more the patient reader could only exclaim, with more justice than Wordsworth, "My God! what a quantity of things you have here. . . ."

T. S. ELIOT AND HIS RELATION TO T. E. HULME

J. R. DANIELLS

THOUGH much has been written concerning the work of T. S. Eliot, the subject still seems farther from exhaustion than the critics. Eliot is variously described as finding the core of reality in himself, as renouncing individuality, and as having compromised his intellectual integrity because he accepts the Church of England. A study by Mr. Thomas McGreevy even corrects Eliot's conception of his own spiritual future: "When he writes:

> 'Because I do not hope to turn again
> Because I do not hope',

I feel that I know better than he does, that I not only hope but I know (since he is a poet and poets are always turning) that he assuredly will turn again. (What is more, I think I can divine the direction in which he will turn next.)"[1]

Eliot's own remark on the criticism evoked by his work is worth quoting: "I am used to having cosmic significances, which I never suspected, extracted from my work (such as it is) by enthusiastic persons at a distance; and to being informed that something which I meant seriously is *vers de société*; and to having my personal biography reconstructed from passages which I got out of books, or which I invented out of nothing because they sounded well; and to having my biography invariably ignored in what I *did* write from personal experience."[2]

In attempting, therefore, a brief formulation of Eliot's position, I have tried to keep as close as possible to his own

[1] *Thomas Stearns Eliot: A Study*, 1931

[2] *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca.*

statements, of which the preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* is the most succinct. Here he tells us that "the general point of view may be described as classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion." Elsewhere he complains that post-Renaissance philosophies exhibit a lack of balance, and he applauds the anti-Romantic and practical sense of realities found in Dante: not to expect perfection from life or from human beings; to look to death for what life cannot give.

The purpose of this paper, however, is not merely to synthetize certain of Eliot's affirmations but also to relate them to the *Speculations* of T. E. Hulme. There are special reasons why Hulme should be introduced. He deserves to be better known in this country for his intrinsic worth and interest; he merits attention as an unthanked pioneer; and he will repay careful study on the part of all who are interested in Eliot. In 1926, Eliot pointed out that his *New Criterion* illustrated a tendency toward what might be vaguely termed Classicism, and mentioned in connection with the movement the work of Sorel, Maurras, Benda, Maritain, Babbitt, and Hulme. Hulme, it will be noticed, is the only Englishman on the list.

Hulme was killed near Nieuport in September, 1917, at the age of thirty-four. From the mass of manuscript which he left a selection was edited by Herbert Read and published under the title *Speculations*. His thought is therefore not couched in any final form, but exhibits the strivings of an enthusiast toward certain positions which he regarded as basic and as determining a world view.

He announces that the notion of a principle of continuity in Nature must be given up. Certain regions in reality differ absolutely: there is the inorganic world of mathematical or physical science, the organic world of

biology, psychology and history, and the world of ethical and religious values. The attempt to explain this last by categories which we may conveniently term "vital"—belonging to the organic world—leads to Romanticism in literature, Relativism in ethics, Idealism in philosophy, and Modernism in religion. All philosophy since the Renaissance has been possessed of the same canons of satisfaction, those of Humanist idealism. A true "critique of satisfaction" would operate in the sphere of religion and show the vanity of earthly desire and the conservation of the higher values. The Romantic has placed perfection in humanity, not immediately, but along various roads. It is necessary to restore the tragic significance of life and close the roads to Romantic escape, forcing the mind back to the centre from which its only release is along an infinite straight line perpendicular to the plane.

Hulme holds that ethical values are absolute and objective and subsist in an absolute and objective hierarchy related to an eternal perfection. Man, burdened with original sin, can accomplish anything of value only by order and discipline, which are therefore creative and liberating. Against this view he places what he terms the Humanistic belief—inherent in the Renaissance, and dominant in the modern doctrines of Humanism—that life is the measure of all values and free personalities a spontaneous source of all good, and he arraigns it as productive of confusions, —a muddling, for example, of the problem of immortality. A complete reaction is therefore necessary, the advocates of which may not even be intelligible to the Romantic critic, since their mental apparatus turns on the axis of a first principle which he denies.

Hulme proceeds to formulate a philosophy of art on

analogous lines. There are two kinds of art, geometrical and "vital" (reproducing Nature). These are created for different necessities of the mind and correspond to different attitudes towards the world. In Byzantine work and in that of India we may find the "classical" or geometrical kind, with its tendency toward abstraction,—an art thoroughly satisfying to its own exponents, who for various reasons experience a feeling of *separation* in the face of Nature. Our own works commonly objectify our feeling of identity with Nature. Hulme thought he saw evidence in the art of Cézanne, Picasso and others, of a new desire to turn the trivial and accidental forms of organic life into something durable and significant.

What Hulme means by the battered terms "Romanticism" and "Classicism" becomes in the end quite clear. The Romantic regards man as a well from which infinite supplies may be drawn. According to the "Classical" view he is a bucket, strictly limited in capacity: the "sane classical dogma of original sin" is opposed to the "split religion" of Romanticism. In verse the Romantic refers often to the infinite and tends to use metaphors of flight. The later stages of Romantic writing are marked by gloom. The Classical poet, on the other hand, shows a holding back, a reservation, never forgetting that man is finite and limited, and preferring the light of ordinary day to that which never was on sea or land. For Hulme the artist's first aim must be to find and express the exact curve of what he sees, for by this sincerity he will get fundamentally good art without necessarily dragging in the infinite. Although by this means he may produce an effect of, say, amusement rather than dignity or vagueness, there is nevertheless at work the same activity as in the highest verse.

Hulme thus rejects flatly certain scales of value which

are often variously associated with terms like Humanistic and Romantic, but more frequently taken for granted, from their close adhesion to the modern mind. Eliot adopts a critical view as definite and more precisely dogmatic in some particulars; moreover, his poetic work points to the same conclusions, both by certain features of its technique and by its emotional progressions over nearly a quarter-century.

Eliot reaffirms the difficulty and necessity of laying aside preconceptions and prejudices of taste. For instance the *Vita Nuova*, he insists, is a mixture of biography and allegory by a recipe now discarded, and is based on the faculty of seeing meaning in final causes rather than in origins. To understand it we must make the conscious attempt, as hard as re-birth, to pass through into a world which is just as reasonable as our own. This done, Dante becomes the exemplar of a practical sense of realities, which shows to advantage beside our own disparted thought, held up by uncertain notions of relativity. Looking back on the centuries when human beings cared somewhat for the salvation of the "soul" but not about each other as "personalities", Eliot finds that even Donne is dangerous to those who, romantically fascinated by character, forget that the spiritual hierarchy holds higher places than his, places reached by such men as Andrewes, whose emotion is not "personal" but wholly and adequately evoked by the object of contemplation.

Eliot is equally ready with Hulme to attack the whole Humanistic ideology: he denies the doctrine of Progress, reaffirms that of Original Sin and develops a salient to enfilade the peculiar position of Mr. Babbitt. Freudianism, he feels, is already a blundering and uncertain step toward the Catholic conception of the human soul, and it seems to him a healthy sign that a grandson of T. H.

Huxley should discover human nature to be fundamentally corrupt. Modernism in its older form being already dead and the Protestant Churches threatened by a hypocritical mixture of "liberal" ideas, we should return to dogma, though at the moment all statements seem to have become meaningless and all dogmas in doubt except the dogmas of science, of which we have read in the newspapers. The Humanism of Mr. Babbitt, Eliot characterizes as a by-product of Protestant theology in its last agonies. If the higher will is to have anything on which to operate, it must be in relation to external objects and objective values; and this seems impossible if there is nothing "anterior, exterior or superior" to the individual.

To the ideologies he attacks, Eliot opposes a positive scheme in which he shows himself more explicit and more precisely dogmatic than Hulme. His values have application both to the individual and to the social order. Mere "experience" is no adequate equipment for the artist. Donne would have risen to a higher plane if to experience he had added a sufficient spiritual discipline. And, on a wider view, he considers it doubtful whether civilization can endure without religion and religion without a church. This latter statement he guards by a warning against a Catholicism of despair without elements of humanism and criticism.

By accepting the Church of England and integrating his beliefs with his criticism, Eliot has left himself much more assailable than did Hulme, who appears never to have formulated his cherished dogmas into a whole or committed himself to association with a doctrinal and ecclesiastical system. Various critics have felt that Eliot cannot remain in his present position and that Anglicanism and intelligence are of necessity separate. He himself tells how the "Times" reviewer of *For Lancelot*

Andrewes gave him a flattering obituary notice: "In words of great seriousness and manifest sincerity, he pointed out that I had suddenly arrested my progress—whither he had supposed me to be moving I do not know—and that to his distress I was unmistakably making off in the wrong direction. Somehow I had failed and had admitted my failure; if not a lost leader, at least a lost sheep; what is more, I was a kind of traitor; and of those who were to find their way to the promised land beyond the waste one might drop a tear at my absence from the roll-call of the new saints. I suppose that the curiosity of this point of view will be apparent only to a few people. But its appearance in what is not only the best but the most respected and respectable of our literary periodicals, came home to me as a hopeful sign of the times. For it meant that the orthodox faith of England is at last relieved from its burden of respectability. A new respectability has arisen to assume the burden; and those who would once have been considered intellectual vagrants are now pious pilgrims, cheerfully plodding the road from nowhere to nowhere, trolling their hymns, satisfied so long as they may be 'on the march'."[3]

This is unequivocal enough, and further passages support it. "Thought, study, mortification, sacrifice: it is such notions as these that should be impressed upon the young." Eliot holds definitely to "fixity of dogma" and believes the world will divide itself with increasing sharpness. One feels that a man of his temperament, habitually careful of his formulations, does not commit himself cumulatively in this manner unless he has taken what he believes to be a permanent position. All efforts so far made to show that he is "turning again" into a path more to the critic's liking exemplify the old habit of

[3] *Thoughts after Lambeth.*

making the wish father to the thought and confirm the contention of Hulme with regard to the *naïveté* of the modern Humanist when he refuses to admit the possibility of a point of view alien to his own canon of satisfaction.

We should expect the literary criticism of Eliot to exhibit a strong judicial element: and, within certain limits, this is the fact. Criticism, for him, would be reduced to the vanishing point if we excluded all but purely literary considerations. And "Art for Art's sake", while still valid as an exhortation to the artist to stick to his job, never can be valid for the reader. D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, David Garnett and Aldous Huxley are all "behind the times" because they lack moral significance. For we tend "to organize our taste in various arts into a whole; we aim in the end at a theory of life, or a view of life, and, so far as we are conscious, to terminate our enjoyment of the arts in a philosophy, and our philosophy in a religion—in such a way that the personal to oneself is fused and completed in the impersonal and general, not extinguished, but enriched, expanded, developed, and more itself by becoming more something not itself."[4]

It is clear, then, that Eliot cannot be admitted by any charitable back-door into the abode of Humanistic philosophy and Romantic criticism. A heretic after the third and fourth admonitions, he belongs with Hulme, the iconoclastic opponent of Romantic idols, the reactionary who did not at all expect agreement from his own generation. Nevertheless, he has made his mark, both as poet and as critic, and reasons for his vogue are not far to seek. He has insisted both by precept and by example on the value of clear intelligence and has shown, paradoxically, considerable power of detachment and ability to deal with

[4]*Poetry and Propaganda, Bookman* (Am.), Feb., 1930.

literary problems purely as such. A further strength lies in his delicate, analytic approach.

In this last respect he differs vastly from Hulme, who, according to Jacob Epstein's introduction to *Speculations*, "was capable of kicking a theory as well as a man downstairs when the occasion demanded." (And Epstein's bust of Hulme appears to confirm the words.) Eliot attacks matters with the efficient simplicity of the hypodermic needle. His choice is in part deliberate in that he prefers the gentler method as being more efficacious. On this point the preface to his *Homage to John Dryden* is explicit: "I have long felt that the poetry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even much of that of inferior inspiration, possesses an elegance and a dignity absent from the popular and pretentious verse of the romantic poets and their successors. To have urged this claim persuasively would have led me indirectly into considerations of politics, education, and theology, which I no longer care to approach in this way. I hope that these three papers may in spite of and partly because of their defects preserve in cryptogram certain notions which, if expressed directly, would be destined to immediate obloquy, followed by perpetual oblivion." This indicates a change of method but not of heart. His mental make-up is as keen and sincere as Hulme's, and his energy directed, as with Hulme, toward radical ends; but his mind is more sympathetic and flexible than that of the young artillery officer, militarist by faith and defender of the militarist ideology, who was killed in 1917.

To return to Eliot's ability to treat literary problems purely as such: his dogmatic position would appear, logically, to inhibit mobility, but actually by his very remove from the spheres of secondary contention he gains perspective. "We should aim (he writes in *Poetry and*

Propaganda) at coming to rest in poetry we believe, but we should pass in and out freely among various poetic worlds." Poetry is a "superior amusement"; it is not a criticism of life or morals, or an equivalent of religion, or a direction in politics, even though it has something to do with all these. It has its own function, which is emotional rather than intellectual and resists intellectual definition. The essential is, that poetry, on whatever philosophy it is based, should express in perfect language some permanent human impulse. By not asking of poetry, as such, more than it can give, by separating it from transcendental truth, yet placing the two in relation one with the other, and by reaffirming the principles of discontinuity, cleavage and distinction which Hulme enunciated, Eliot has performed a most useful service. The separate components of his thought, widely held by diverse minds, are assembled into a critical mechanism of great strength and fineness—which, above all, works.

The final reason we have suggested for Eliot's acceptability as a critic is his gift for intelligent analysis. Everywhere he demands and exhibits this quality, attacking with perhaps unnecessary sharpness those who pretend to more intelligence than they possess. He finds in Arnold little gift for consistency, definition or connected reasoning, but a kind of illusion of clarity and precision. He sees Pater as incapable either of taking philosophy or theology seriously or of seeing any work of art simply as it is. In religion, in philosophy and in criticism Eliot asks—and endeavors always to use—a fuller, a keener and a more susceptible intelligence. For, as he writes in *The Sacred Wood*, "the end of the enjoyment of poetry is a pure contemplation from which all the accidents of personal emotion are removed; . . . and without a labour which is largely a labour of the intelligence, we are

unable to attain that state of vision *amor intellectualis Dei*."

Hulme, then, subserves a study of Eliot by presenting in their simplest and starkest form the dogmas which Eliot, with much greater address, has employed as his base of operations. That Hulme worked with shovel and wrecking bar while Eliot prefers laboratory methods makes no difference to their agreement in purpose. Both stimulate their readers to wider and closer thought, whether these readers are in agreement or in opposition. Both are avid and independent. Eliot, older and more balanced than Hulme, brings an enviable detachment, completeness, and intellectual soundness to his task.

Passing from Eliot's criticism to his poetry, we find again significant filiations with Hulme. Not that he derived anything of importance from the few imagist pieces which form Hulme's complete published output; but it is certain their concision and vigour appealed to him. He read them to extension classes with "immediate effect". And this sureness of emotional appeal is the best and first result of Eliot's own technique. He achieves Hulme's objective, a visual, concrete language adapted "to hand over sensations bodily". His most obscure passages are not without this power.

Hulme found real communication in poetry a rare occurrence and hoped for a renovation of English verse through the avoidance of conventional language and the creation of new metaphors to effect precise transfer to the reader. Eliot has followed this programme entirely in the spirit of Hulme though beyond his letter. A very real effect of renovation is produced by the personal rhythm he gives to the conventional pattern of iambic pentameter and by his use of rhyme for precise and limited effects rather than as a support to the whole verse-structure.

And one feels how Hulme would have applauded the accurate emotional progressions of the *Waste Land*, the aptness of transition and the relevant intensities.

It is of value, also, to see how far Eliot follows Hulme in his dislike of romantically personal verse. We are seldom able to tell when the experience is first hand. He chooses the objective form, a figure, a situation, a dramatic fragment which will exactly embody the emotion he desires to express. His situations range from the high calm and gentleness of the juniper tree scene in *Ash Wednesday* to the "Fragments" involving Sweeney and Doris. Eliot's preference for objectivity we have already seen in his ranking of Andrewes above Donne. The same preference has shaped the *Waste Land*, the substance of which, removed from local and personal preoccupation, lies in what is seen by Tiresias, aged, wise and partaking of both sexes.

The final and main point I wish to make in connection with Eliot's poems is that, taken as a connected sequence, they exemplify the process described by Hulme as "closing the roads," "forcing the mind back to the centre," "restoring the tragic significance of life," and presenting as an escape the "infinite straight line perpendicular to the plane."

To begin with the Prufrock verses and the *Poems* of 1920: these sound a consistent strain of futility, disillusion and conscious withdrawal from facile solutions. For the hesitant, ineffectual Prufrock, life is measured out "with coffee spoons." For others it is merely sordid. Dawn brings the thought

> "of all the hands
> That are raising dingy shades
> In a thousand furnished rooms."

And

"Midnight shakes the memory
As a madman shakes a dead geranium."

So it goes on,—continued disgust with the trivial, unrelated, unsubstantial phenomena of life. Even in the one poem which begins as a simple lyric, *La Figlia che Piange*, the theme is separation, with a gesture

"Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand."

The finest of the earlier poems is probably *Gerontion*, which depicts an old man—every man—living in a rented and decaying house, "a dull head among windy spaces." And the figure we finally get to know best is that of "Apeneck" Sweeney: gone are the eagles and the trumpets, the artists in fresco, Sir Philip Sidney; Sweeney and Doris dominate the contemporary stage:

"We all gotta do what we gotta do
We're gona sit here and drink this booze
We're gona sit here and have a tune
We're gona stay and we're gona go
And somebody's gotta pay the rent."

Sweeney appears to represent the residual common characteristics of the human race:

"The lengthened shadow of a man
Is history, said Emerson
Who had not seen the silhouette
Of Sweeney straddled in the sun."

This consideration of the earlier poems may appear a battering down of the open door. But it subserves a distinction which has not been sufficiently emphasized: in addition to his disgust with Sweeney and modern urban life, Eliot shows a profound dissatisfaction with man and with life in a much wider sense.

In the *Waste Land*, out of fragments of ancient ritual, evocations of the past by literary reference, and thumbnail

sketches of modern existence, there emerges a strong and controlled pessimism over the whole mundane situation. And this is not confined to a reaction from the present age. The plan of the poem is based on Miss Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. It is clear from this book that the Fisher King, whose debility is reflected in the drought and desolation of his kingdom, is an ancient figure metamorphosed in story after story in the course of centuries. And that, I suggest, is the reason for

> "Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
> And on the king my father's death before him."

Again, in "Death by Water" generations are linked in a common fate:

> "Gentile or Jew,
> O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
> Consider Phlebas who was once handsome and tall as you."

The argument could be extended: one has only to think of the immemorial Tiresias who has "foresuffered all", and the falling towers of Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, London, the recurrent "unreal city." To those who said he had mirrored the disillusion of an age, Eliot replied: "There are no 'disillusioned ages,' only disillusioned individuals; and our time is just as deluded as any other."[5] Eliot's disillusion is basically independent of time or place; it is the disillusion which Hulme desired for the Humanistic world.

Waste Land and *The Hollow Men* have been followed by about a dozen short poems, six of which are gathered in the book *Ash Wednesday*. One of the rest, *Journey of the Magi*, depicts the Wise Men on their long journey,

[5] *Experiment in Criticism, Bookman* (Am.), Nov., 1929.

suffering from the Sweeneys of that age. It concludes:

> "this Birth was
> Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
> We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
> But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
> With an alien people clutching their gods.
> I should be glad of another death."

The same note sounds in *A Song for Simeon*:

> "Now at this birth season of decease,
> Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,
> Grant Israel's consolation
> To one who has eighty years and no tomorrow."

Animula has resemblances in theme to the *Immortality Ode*, but there are no "trailing clouds of glory":

> "The heavy burden of the growing soul
> Perplexes and offends more, day by day;
> Week by week, offends and perplexes more."

Marina is, in part, a repetition of the Gerontion theme, and in *Triumphal March* is pictured the unpleasant conjunction of mob and militarism. *Difficulties of a Statesman* evokes from committees and confusion the full implication of its title. Everywhere there is a deliberate facing of reality and steadying of the vision, from which springs the emended and intensified utterance,

> "Pray for us now and at the hour of our birth."

To return to *Ash Wednesday*: the third part of this poem represents most clearly the upward escape from the centre of being when all lateral removes have been shown unprofitable. Its progressions are perhaps a condensed rendering of the whole course of Eliot's poetry:

"At the first turning of the second stair
I turned and saw below
The same shape twisted on the banister
Under the vapour in the fetid air
Struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears
The deceitful face of hope and of despair."

As he ascends,

"There were no more faces and the stair was dark,
Damp, jaggèd, like an old man's mouth drivelling beyond repair,
Or the toothed gullet of an agèd shark."

He continues upward:

"At the first turning of the third stair
Was a slotted window bellied like the fig's fruit
And beyond the hawthorn blossom and a pasture scene
The broadbacked figure dressed in blue and green
Enchanted the maytime with an antique flute."

And thus, Sweeney and Doris and Tiresias and perhaps also Marina being left beneath, we find

"Distraction, music of the flute, stops and steps of the mind over the third stair,
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair
Climbing the stair.
Lord, I am not worthy
Lord, I am not worthy, but speak the word only."

* * * * * *

In this paper I have not pretended to characterize completely either Eliot's criticism or his verse, but only to show the fundamental identity of his position with that of Hulme, and to bring out something of Hulme's own neglected merit. Both men take a view of life in opposi-

tion to the dominant conceptions of the present time; both hold to a dogmatic basis, but in Eliot at least without narrowness. Substantially at one with the iconoclastic Hulme, Eliot has faced the problems of life with intelligence and with faith, giving ear to many opinions yet returning to his own position with the patience of conviction. Not least, he has produced a body of criticism which for seminal qualities is without contemporary English parallel.

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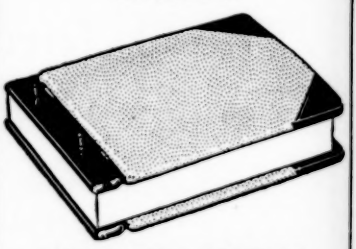

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